



SAINT STANISLAS  
Episc. Polonie, Mart

THE LIVES  
OF  
THE FATHERS, MARTYRS  
AND OTHER PRINCIPAL  
SAINTS

BY THE REV. ALBAN BUTLER

EDITED FOR DAILY USE BY

THE REV. BERNARD KELLY, F.R. HIST. SOC.

VOLUME II



VIRTUE & COMPANY LIMITED  
LONDON, DUBLIN AND BELFAST



Nihil obstat Georgius lan. Smith, S.Th.D.,  
Ph.D.

Gensor deputatus.

Imprimatur E. Moryn Bernard  
Vic. gen.

Westmonasterii, die 9. Martii, 1949.

Acc No.

2 8633

Class.

G9

Stack No.

35/2

# CONTENTS OF VOLUME 2

## MAY

DATE	PAGE
1. ST PHILIP, APOSTLE . . . . .	437
2. ST ATHANASIUS, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH . . .	439
3. THE DISCOVERY OF THE HOLY CROSS . . . . .	454
4. ST MONICA, WIDOW . . . . .	459
5. ST PIUS V, POPE, CONFESSOR . . . . .	465
6. ST JOHN BEFORE THE LATIN GATE . . . . .	473
7. ST STANISLAS, MARTYR, BISHOP OF CRACOW . . . . .	476
8. ST PETER ARCHBISHOP OF TARENTAISE, NOW CALLED MONSTIERS IN SAVOY . .	480
9. ST GREGORY NAZIANZEN, B.C., DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH . . . . .	483
10. ST ISIDORE OF MADRID, LABOURER, PATRON OF MADRID . . . . .	497
11. ST MAMMERTUS, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF VIENNE . . . . .	500
12. ST NEREUS AND ST ACHILLEUS, MARTYRS, CHAMBERLAINS TO ST FLAVIA DOMITILLA, WHO SUFFERED WITH THEM . . . . .	501
13. ST JOHN THE SILENT, BISHOP, CONFESSOR . . . . .	502
14. ST BONIFACE, MARTYR . . . . .	506
15. SAINTS PETER, ANDREW, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS . . . . .	509
16. ST JOHN NEPOMUCEN, MARTYR . . . . .	511
17. ST PASCHAL BAYLON, CONFESSOR . . . . .	519
18. ST ERIC, MARTYR, KING OF SWEDEN . . . . .	523
19. ST DUNSTAN, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY . . . . .	525
20. ST BERNARDIN OF SIENNA, CONFESSOR . . . . .	529
21. ST GODRICK, HERMIT . . . . .	534
22. ST YVO, CONFESSOR . . . . .	537
23. ST JULIA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR . . . . .	540
24. ST VINCENT OF LERINS, CONFESSOR . . . . .	542
25. ST GREGORY VII, POPE, CONFESSOR . . . . .	544
26. ST AUGUSTINE, BISHOP, CONFESSOR, APOSTLE OF THE ENGLISH . . . .	548
27. ST BEDE, CONFESSOR, FATHER OF THE CHURCH . . . . .	556
28. ST GERMANUS, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF PARIS . . . . .	564
29. ST CYRIL, MARTYR . . . . .	569
30. ST FERDINAND III, CONFESSOR, KING OF CASTILE AND LEON . . . .	570
31. ST PETRONILLA, VIRGIN . . . . .	576

## JUNE

1. ST PAMPHILUS, PRIEST AND MARTYR . . . . .	579
2. SAINTS POTHINUS (BISHOP), SANGTUS, ATTALUS, BLANDINA, AND THE OTHER MARTYRS OF LYONS . . . . .	581

## JUNE

DATE	PAGE
3. ST CLOTILDIS, OR CLOTILDA, QUEEN OF FRANCE . . . . .	592
4. ST QUIRINUS, BISHOP, MARTYR . . . . .	594
5. ST BONIFACE, ARCHBISHOP OF MENTZ, APOSTLE OF GERMANY, AND MARTYR . . . . .	597
6. ST PHILIP THE DEACON . . . . .	605
7. ST PAUL, MARTYR, BISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE . . . . .	609
8. ST WILLIAM, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK . . . . .	612
9. ST COLUMBA, OR COLUMKILLIE, ABBOT . . . . .	614
10. BLESSED HENRY OF TREVISO, CONFESSOR . . . . .	616
11. ST BARNABAS, APOSTLE . . . . .	617
12. ST JOHN OF SAHAGUN, CONFESSOR, HERMIT OF THE ORDER OF ST AUGUSTINE . . . . .	623
13. ST ANTHONY OF PADUA, CONFESSOR . . . . .	625
14. ST BASIL THE GREAT, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF CAESAREA . . . . .	632
15. SAINTS VITUS, OR GUY, CRESCENTIA, AND MODESTUS, MARTYRS . . . . .	645
16. ST JOHN FRANCIS REGIS, CONFESSOR, OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS . . . . .	646
17. ST NICANDER AND ST MARCIAN, MARTYRS . . . . .	661
18. ST MARCUS AND ST MARCELLIANUS, MARTYRS . . . . .	663
19. ST GERVASIUS AND ST PROTASIUS, MARTYRS . . . . .	665
20. ST SILVERIUS, POPE, MARTYR . . . . .	667
21. ST ALOYSIUS (OR LEWIS) GONZAGA, CONFESSOR . . . . .	671
22. ST ALBAN, PROTOMARTYR OF BRITAIN . . . . .	681
23. ST ETHELDREDA, OR AUDRY, VIRGIN, ABBESS . . . . .	686
24. THE NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST . . . . .	688
25. ST PROSPER OR AQUITAIN, CONFESSOR . . . . .	692
26. ST JOHN AND ST PAUL, MARTYRS . . . . .	694
27. ST LADISLAS I, CONFESSOR, KING OF HUNGARY . . . . .	695
28. ST IRENÆUS, MARTYR, BISHOP OF LYONS . . . . .	696
29. ST PETER, PRINCE OF THE APOSTLES . . . . .	702
30. ST PAUL, APOSTLE . . . . .	720

## JULY

1. ST RUMOLD, BISHOP, MARTYR, PATRON OF MECHLIN . . . . .	741
2. VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN . . . . .	742
3. ST PHOCAS, GARDENER, MARTYR . . . . .	746
4. ST ULRIC, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF AUGSBURG . . . . .	748
5. ST PETER OF LUXEBURG, CONFESSOR, CARDINAL, BISHOP OF METZ . . . . .	750
6. ST PALLADIUS, BISHOP, CONFESSOR, APOSTLE OF THE SCOTS . . . . .	755
7. ST PANTÆNUS, FATHER OF THE CHURCH . . . . .	757
8. ST WITHBURGE, VIRGIN . . . . .	758
9. ST EPHREM OF EDESSA, CONFESSOR, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH . . . . .	759

# CONTENTS

vii

## JULY

DATE	PAGE
10. THE SEVEN BROTHERS, MARTYRS, AND ST FELICITAS, THEIR MOTHER . . . . .	767
11. ST JAMES, BISHOP OF NISIBIS, CONFESSOR . . . . .	769
12. ST JOHN GUALBERT, ABBOT, FOUNDER OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDER OF VALLISUMBROSA . . . . .	774
13. ST EUGENIUS, BISHOP OF CARTHAGE, AND HIS COMPANIONS, CONFESSORS . . . . .	778
14. ST CAMILLUS DE LELLIS, CONFESSOR . . . . .	785
15. ST HENRY II, EMPEROR . . . . .	790
„ ST SWITHIN OR SWITHUN, CONFESSOR, BISHOP AND PATRON OF WINCHESTER . . . . .	795
16. ST EUSTATHIUS, CONFESSOR, PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH . . . . .	798
17. ST ALEXIUS, CONFESSOR . . . . .	801
18. ST SYMPHOROSA, AND HER SEVEN SONS, MARTYRS . . . . .	803
19. ST VINCENT OF PAUL, CONFESSOR, FOUNDER OF THE LAZARITES, OR FATHERS OF THE MISSION . . . . .	805
20. ST JOSEPH BARSABAS, CONFESSOR . . . . .	816
21. ST PRAXEDES, VIRGIN . . . . .	817
22. ST MARY MAGDALEN . . . . .	818
23. ST APOLLINARIS, MARTYR, BISHOP OF RAVENNA . . . . .	830
24. ST LUPUS, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF TROYES . . . . .	831
25. ST JAMES THE GREAT, APOSTLE . . . . .	834

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### VOLUME II

ST STANISLAS, EPISC. POLONIE, MART . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
ST CLOTILDE . . . . .	<i>To face page 592</i>
ST PETRUS . . . . .	” ” 702
ST MARIA MAGDALENA . . . . .	” ” 818

CHECKED

## ST PHILIP, APOSTLE

ST PHILIP was of Bethsaida, in Galilee, and called by our Saviour to follow him<sup>1</sup> the day after St Peter and St Andrew. He was at that time a married man and had several daughters; but his being engaged in the married state hindered him not, as St Chrysostom observes, from meditating continually on the law and the prophets, which disposed him for the important discovery of the Messias, in the person of Jesus Christ, in obedience to whose command he forsook all to follow him, and became thenceforth the inseparable companion of his ministry and labours. Philip had no sooner discovered the Messias than he was desirous to make his friend Nathanael a sharer in his happiness, saying to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write," that is, the Messias; "Jesus, the son of Joseph, of Nazareth." Nathanael was not so ready to give his assent to this assertion of his friend, by reason that the supposed Messias was reported to be of Nazareth. Philip therefore desired him "to come" himself to Jesus, "and see"; not doubting but, upon his personal acquaintance with the Son of God, he would be as much convinced of the truth as he was himself. Nathanael complied, and Jesus, seeing him approach, said within his hearing, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." Nathanael asked him how he came to know him. Jesus replied, "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." Nathanael, as two holy fathers explain the matter, calling to mind that the closeness of his retirement on that occasion was such that no human creature could see him, owned him hereupon for the "Son of God" and the "King of Israel"; or, in other words, the Messiah, foretold by Moses and the prophets. The marriage at Cana of Galilee happening three days after, to which Jesus and his disciples were invited, St Philip was present at it with the rest. The year following, when our Lord formed the college of apostles, Philip was appointed one of that number, and, from the several passages of the gospel, he appears to have been particularly dear to his divine Master. Thus, when Jesus was about to feed five thousand persons who had followed him into the wilderness, for the greater evidence of the miracle and for the trial of the apostle's faith, Jesus proposed to him the difficulty

<sup>1</sup> Jo. i. 43.

of feeding the multitudes in that desolate place.<sup>1</sup> And a little before our Saviour's passion, certain Gentiles, desirous to see Christ, made their first address to Philip, and by him and St Andrew obtained that favour. Our Saviour, in the discourse he made to his disciples immediately after his last supper, having promised them a more clear and perfect knowledge of his heavenly Father than they had had hitherto, St Philip cried out, with a holy eagerness and impatience, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." From which words our Saviour took occasion to inculcate afresh a steady belief of his divinity, and perfect equality with the Father, saying, "So long a time have I been with you (teaching you who I am both by my words and actions), and have you not known me? (If you beheld me with the eyes of faith such as I really am, in seeing me you would see the Father also, because) I am in the Father, and the Father is in me."<sup>2</sup>

After our Lord's ascension the gospel was to be preached to the whole world by a few persons who had been eye-witnesses of his miracles, and were enabled, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to confirm their testimony concerning him by doing the like wonderful works themselves. That this might be accomplished, it was necessary that the disciples should quickly disperse themselves into all parts of the world. St Philip accordingly preached the gospel in the two Phrygias, as Theodoret and Eusebius assure us from undoubted monuments. St Polycarp, who was only converted in the year 80, enjoyed his conversation for some time,<sup>3</sup> consequently St Philip must have lived to a very advanced age. It appears, from a passage of Polycrates, quoted by Eusebius,<sup>4</sup> that he was buried at Hierapolis, in Phrygia, which city was indebted to his relics for its preservation by continual miracles, as is averred by the author of the sermon on the twelve apostles, attributed to St Chrysostom.<sup>5</sup> An arm of St Philip was brought from Constantinople to Florence in 1204, whereof we have an authentic history in the Bollandists. The Orientals keep his festival on the 14th of November; the Latins on the 1st of May, with St James. His body is said to be in the church of SS. Philip and James, in Rome, which was dedicated to God under their name in 560. The Emperor Theodosius, in a vision, received from St John the Evangelist and St Philip the assurance of victory over the tyrant Eugenius, the morning before the battle, in 394, as Theodoret relates.<sup>6</sup>

From St Philip we must particularly learn an ardent love of God and desire to see the Father. He asked only this favour, because this was his only desire. Is it ours? Do we feel it so perfectly as to extinguish all inordinate earthly affections and desires in our breasts? Do we employ the proper means to attain to this happy disposition? To obtain it, let us employ the succour of this apostle's prayers, and by disengaging our

<sup>1</sup> Jo. vi. 5.<sup>4</sup> B. iii. c. 32.<sup>2</sup> Ib. xiv.<sup>5</sup> T. viii. Ed. Ben.<sup>3</sup> See Tillemont, t. i. p. 384.<sup>6</sup> B. v. c. 24.

hearts from corruption and vanity, become, in desires and affections, citizens of heaven. The pilgrim soul sees herself a stranger here on earth and discovers nothing in this desert place of her banishment but an abyss of vanity and subjects of compunction, grief, and fears. On the other side, looking up to God, she contemplates the magnificence and splendour of his kingdom, which will have no end; its peace, security, sanctity without stain, delights without sorrow, unchangeable and incomprehensible joys; and she cries out in a holy transport, "O joy surpassing all joys, and without which there is no true joy, when shall I possess you? O, sovereign good, discover to me some ray of thy beauty and of thy glory; may my heart be set on flame by thy love, and my soul languish and waste with desire to be united to thee, to behold thee face to face, to sing thy praises night and day, to drink of the plenty of thy house, and of the torrent of thy delights, to be for ever confirmed in thy love, and in some measure transformed into thee!" Such a soul seeks to hide herself from the eyes of men, to live unknown to the world; and, in retirement and repose, to apply herself to prayer, all her thoughts being taken up in contemplating the glorious things which are said of the blessed city of her God. All worldly enjoyments and distractions are insupportable to her, and she finds no comfort in this place of banishment but in singing the praises of her God, in adoring and doing always his will, and in the sweet sighs and tears with which she seeks him and begs him to reign perfectly in her affections by his grace and love, and to draw her speedily to himself out of this Babylon, in which every object increases her affliction and inflames her desire, seeming to say to her, "Where is thy God?"

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 1 :*

ST ACIUS and ST ACHEOLUS, martyrs of Amiens : ST ANDEOLUS, martyr, a disciple of St Polycarp : ST ASAPH, Bishop, a disciple of St Kentigern whose life he wrote as well as several canons on ordinances of the Church : ST BRIEUC, Bishop : ST JAMES THE LESS, the best known of all the apostles, son of Zebedee and a kinsman of our Lord. His Feast is always kept with that of ST PHILIP, Apostle : ST MARCOU or MARCULFUS, 1558, Abbot, famous for miracles, especially for curing the disease known as "the king's evil" : BLESSED RICHARD REYNOLDS, Bridgettine, martyr : ST SIGISMUND, king and martyr; son of an Arian king, he came into the true fold through the teaching of St Avitus, Bishop of Vienne; he was drowned after he had reigned King of Burgundy for one year.

## MAY 2

### ST ATHANASIUS, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

(A.D. 373)

[From his works, and the fathers and historians of that age. See his life by Hermant, who first cleared up the intricate history of Arianism. See also Tillemont, Ceillier, Orsi, the Benedictin editors of this father, and Combefis, Bibl. Concionat. p. 500 ad 530.]

ST GREGORY NAZIANZEN begins with these words his panegyric of this glorious saint and champion of the faith:<sup>1</sup> "When I praise Athanasius,

<sup>1</sup> Or. 21.

virtue itself is my theme: for I name every virtue as often as I mention him who was possessed of all virtues. He was the true pillar of the church. His life and conduct were the rule of bishops, and his doctrine the rule of the orthodox faith." St Athanasius was a native of Alexandria, and seems to have been born about the year 296. His parents, who were Christians and remarkable for their virtue, were solicitous to procure him the best education. After he had learned grammar and the first elements of the sciences, St Alexander, before he was raised to the episcopal chair of that city, was much delighted with the virtuous deportment of the youth and with the pregnancy of his wit; and took upon himself the direction of his studies, brought him up under his own eye, always made him eat with him, and employed him as his secretary. Athanasius copied diligently the virtues of his master, imbibed his maxims of piety and holy zeal, was directed by him in the plan and method of his studies, and received from him the greatest assistance in the pursuit of them. By writing under so great a master he acquired the most elegant, easy, and methodical manner of composition. Profane sciences he only learned as far as they were necessary or might be rendered subservient to those that are more sublime and important; but from their aid he contracted an elegant, clear, methodical, and masterly style; and was qualified to enter the lists in defence of our holy faith with the greatest advantage. However, the sacred studies of religion and virtue he made the serious employment of his whole life, and how much he excelled in them the sequel of his history and perusal of his works show. From his easy and ready manner of quoting the holy scriptures one would imagine he knew them by heart; at least, by the assiduous meditation and study of those divine oracles, he had filled his heart with the spirit of the most perfect piety and his mind with the true science of the profound mysteries which our divine religion contains. But in his study of the sacred writings the tradition of the church was his guide, which he diligently sought in the comments of the ancient doctors, as he testifies. In another place he declares that he had learned it from holy inspired masters and martyrs for the divinity of Christ.<sup>1</sup> That he might neglect no branch of ecclesiastical learning, he applied himself diligently to the study of the canons of the church, in which no one was more perfectly versed; nor was he a stranger to the civil law, as appears from his works; on which account Sulpicius Severus styles him a lawyer.

Achillas, who had succeeded St Peter in the patriarchal see of Alexandria, dying in 313, St Alexander was promoted to that dignity. The desire of grounding himself in the most perfect practice of virtue drew St Athanasius into the deserts to the great St Anthony about the year 315, with whom he made a considerable stay, serving him in quality

<sup>1</sup> Lib. de Incarn. p. 66.



of a disciple, and regarding it as an honour to pour water on his hands when he washed them.<sup>1</sup> When he had by his retreat prepared himself for the ministry of the altar, he returned to the city, and having passed through the inferior degrees of ecclesiastical orders, was ordained deacon about the year 319. St Alexander was so much taken with his prudence, virtue, and learning that he desired to have him always with him, and governed his flock by his advice. He stood much in need of such a second in defending his church against the calumnies and intrigues of the schismatics and heretics. The holy patriarch St Peter had, at the intercession of the martyrs and confessors, dispensed with the rigour of the canons in behalf of certain persons who, through frailty, had fallen into idolatry during their persecution, and upon their repentance had received them again to communion. Meletius, Bishop of Lycos in Thebais, unjustly took offence at this lenity, and on that pretence formed a schism over all Egypt against St Peter and his successors. Arius, a Lybian by birth, and a deacon, who for seditious practices was expelled the church by his bishop, St Peter, fell in with Meletius. St Peter was so well acquainted with his turbulent spirit that no entreaties could move him, even when he was going to martyrdom, to receive him into the communion of the church. However, his successor, Achillas, upon his submission and repentance, not only admitted him into his communion but also ordained him priest, and intrusted him with the church of Baucalis, one of the parishes of the city. Achillas was succeeded by St Alexander, whose promotion Arius resented as an injury done to himself, being in his own opinion the more worthy; and some time after impudently and blasphemously asserted that Christ was not God, but a mere creature, though formed before all other created beings (but not from eternity), and of a nature superior in perfection to all other creatures. St Alexander long endeavoured by mildness to reclaim the heresiarch, but was compelled by his obstinacy to cut him off from the communion of the church, in a synod of all the bishops under his jurisdiction held at Alexandria. Arius fled first into Palestine, and thence to Nicomedia, where he had already gained by letters the confidence of Eusebius, the crafty bishop of that city. In 319 St Alexander sent an account of his proceedings against Arius in a circular letter directed to all the bishops of the church, signed by St Athanasius and many others. In 325 he took the holy deacon with him to the Council of Nice, who there greatly distinguished himself by the extraordinary zeal and learning with which he encountered not only Arius but also Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis, and Maris, the principal protectors of that heresiarch; and he had a great share in the disputations and decisions of that venerable assembly, as Theodoret, Sozomen, and St Gregory Nazianzen testify.

<sup>1</sup> Athan. Vit. p. 794.

Five months after this great council, St Alexander, lying on his death-bed, by a heavenly inspiration recommended to his clergy and people the choice of Athanasius for his successor, thrice repeating his name; and when he was found to be absent, he cried out, "Athanasius, you think to escape, but you are mistaken."<sup>1</sup> Sozomen says he had absconded for fear of being chosen. In consequence of this recommendation, the bishops of all Egypt assembled at Alexandria, and finding the people and clergy unanimous in their choice of Athanasius for patriarch, they confirmed the election about the middle of the year 326; for St Cyril testifies<sup>2</sup> that he held that chair forty-six years. He seems then to have been about thirty years of age. He ordained Frumentius Bishop of the Æthiopians, and made the visitation of the churches under his jurisdiction throughout all Egypt. The Meletians continued, after the death of their author, to hold private assemblies, ordain new bishops by their own authority, everywhere to divide the people, and to fill Egypt with factions and schisms. In vain did St Athanasius employ all the power which his authority put into his hands to bring them back to the unity of the church. The severity of their morals gained them a reputation among the people, and their opposition to the Catholics moved the Arians to court their friendship. Though these schismatics were in the beginning orthodox in faith, and the first and most violent opposers of Arius, yet they soon after joined his partizans in calumniating and impugning St Athanasius; for which purpose they entered into a solemn league of iniquity together.

Arius being recalled from banishment, into which he had been sent by the emperor, St Athanasius refused him entrance into the church; whereupon he retired to his friends in Palestine and the neighbouring eastern provinces, at whose entreaty Constantine urged St Athanasius to admit him to his communion. The intrepid patriarch answered the emperor that the Catholic Church could hold no communion with heresy that so impudently attacked the divinity of Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis, after three years' banishment, seeing Arius already released from his exile, wrote a letter to the emperor, which is extant in Socrates and Sozomen, artfully declaring that they all agreed in faith, that they received the word consubstantial, having now fully examined its meaning, and that they entirely gave themselves up to peace; but could not anathematize Arius, whom, by a long converse with him, and both by word and writing, they had found not to be guilty of what had been laid to his charge, and who had already met with a favourable reception from his imperial majesty. Hereupon the sentence of their banishment was reversed, and they were both permitted to return to their

<sup>1</sup> Sozomen, b. ii. c. 17; Theodoret, b. ii. c. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Apol. contra Arian. p. 178, and Socr. lib. ii. c. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. i.

respective sees. This Eusebius had before ambitiously procured his translation from the see of Berytus to that of Nicomedia, which being at that time the residence of the eastern emperors, gave him a fair opportunity of ingratiating himself with the great ministers of state, and thereby of rendering himself considerable for power and interest at court. He neither wanted parts nor learning, was of a subtle and daring temper, a deep dissembler, and the most artful of men; and on these accounts a proper instrument of the devil to be the contriver of the calumnies and persecutions against our saint and the Catholic Church. He was no sooner come back to Nicomedia than he began to set his engines at work. He first wrote a civil letter to St Athanasius, wherein he endeavoured to justify Arius. But neither his own flattering words, nor the emperor's threats, which he procured, prevailing, he wrote to the Meletians that the time was now come to put their designs in execution and impeach Athanasius. It was some time before they could agree what they should lay to his charge. At length they sent three of their schismatical bishops, Isio, Eudæmon, and Callinicus, to Nicomedia, who undertook to accuse him to the emperor of having exacted linen for the use of his church, and imposed it as a tribute upon the people; also of sending a purse of gold to one Philumenus, who was plotting to usurp the empire. Athanasius being summoned to appear before Constantine, his cause was heard in his palace of Psammathia, situated in the suburbs of Nicomedia. The emperor, having examined the accusations against him, was convinced of his innocence, acquitted him of what had been alleged against him, and sent him back with a letter to the faithful of Alexandria, wherein he calls him a man of God and a most venerable person.

Eusebius, though baffled for the present, did not despair of compassing his ends; and, in the meantime, contrived the banishment of St Eustathius, the most zealous and holy patriarch of Antioch. And soon after, new allegations were laid against Athanasius, charging him with the murder of Arsenius, a Meletian bishop, and with other crimes. Constantine appeared shocked at the accusation of the murder, and sent an order to St Athanasius to clear himself in a council which was to be held at Cæsarea, in Palestine, whereof Eusebius, one of the Arian party, was bishop. The saint, disliking it, no doubt, on this account, and justly apprehensive he should not have liberty allowed him for his defence, did not appear. This his enemies represented to Constantine as the effect of pride and stubbornness; who, being exasperated by these suggestions, began to entertain an ill opinion of him, and appointed another council to assemble at Tyre, where he commanded Athanasius, at his peril, to appear. The council met there in August 335, consisting of sixty bishops, chiefly Arians. St Athanasius, after some delay, came thither, attended

with a considerable number of bishops of his own province, and among these the illustrious confessors, Paphnutius and Potamon. All the chiefs of the Arian sect were present. Though the saint had been convicted of no crime, the Arian bishops pronounced against him a sentence of deposition, forbidding him to reside at Alexandria lest his presence should excite new disorders there, repeating in their sentence the calumnies which had been so fully refuted.

Constantine, who had refused to see or give audience to our saint on his arrival at Constantinople, whom he looked upon as justly condemned by a council, sent an order to the bishops of Tyre to adjourn to Jerusalem for the dedication of the church of the holy sepulchre, which he had caused to be built there. Arius came thither at this time to the council with a letter from the emperor, and a profession of faith which he had presented to him, and which is extant in Socrates. In it the subtle heretic professes his belief in Christ "as begotten before all worlds: God the Word, by whom all things were made, &c." But neither the word consubstantial, nor anything equivalent to it, was there. The heresiarch had assured the emperor that he received the Council of Nice, who was thus imposed upon by his hypocrisy; but he ordered the bishops to examine his profession of faith. The Eusebians readily embraced the opportunity which they had long waited for, declared Arius orthodox, and admitted him to the communion. St Athanasius, in the meantime, having requested of the emperor, who had refused him audience, that his pretended judges might be obliged to confront him, and that he might be allowed the liberty to exhibit his complaints against them, Constantine sent them an order to come to Constantinople to give an account of their transactions at Tyre. But only six, and these the most artful of the number, obeyed the summons, namely, Eusebius, Theognis, Maris, Patrophilus, Ursacius, and Valens. These agreed to attack St Athanasius with a fresh accusation, as they did, charging him with having threatened to hinder the yearly transportation of corn from Alexandria to Constantinople. This accusation, though protested against by the saint as absolutely false and to the last degree improbable, was nevertheless believed by Constantine, who expressed his resentment at it, and banished him, in consequence, to Triers, then the chief city of the Belgic Gaul.

The holy man arrived there in the beginning of the year 336, and was received with the greatest respect by St Maximinus, bishop of the place, and by Constantine the younger, who commanded there for his father. St Anthony and the people of Alexandria wrote to the emperor in favour of their pastor; but he answered that he could not despise the judgment of a council. The saint had the satisfaction to be informed that his church at Alexandria constantly refused to admit Arius. The year after, on Whitsunday, the 12th of May, Constantine departed this

life, being sixty-three years and almost three months old, whilst he yet wore the Neophyte's white garment after his baptism. His historian testifies with what ardour the people offered up their prayers to God for his soul. He was buried in the porch of the church of the twelve apostles, which he had founded in Constantinople for the burying-place of the emperors and patriarchs, though he had built that of St Irene for the great church or the cathedral. He would be buried in that holy place, according to Eusebius, "that he might deserve to enjoy the benefit of the mystical sacrifice, and the communion of devout prayers."<sup>1</sup> Constantine's three sons divided the empire, as their father's will directed. Constantine, the eldest, had Britain, Spain, Gaul, and all that lies on this side the Alps; Constantius, the second son, Thrace, Asia, Egypt, and the East; Constans, the youngest, had Italy, Africa, Greece, and Illyricum. Constantine, the younger, restored St Athanasius to his see, sending with him a letter filled with high commendations of the holy prelate, and expressions of great respect for his sanctity and of indignation against his adversaries. The saint passed through Syria, and was received by his flock with a joy and pomp equal to the triumph of an emperor.

The city of Alexandria was situate within the jurisdiction of Constantius, whom the Arians had gained over to their party without much difficulty. These heretics accused St Athanasius afresh to the three emperors for raising tumults and seditions upon his return, for committing violences and murder, and selling, for his own private use, the corn which Constantine had destined for the support of widows and ecclesiastics in those countries where corn did not grow; but the attestations of the bishops who had received it in Lybia justified him and covered his accusers with confusion. Constantine and Constans sent away their deputies with disgrace; but Constantius, being met at Antioch by Eusebius of Nicomedia and others of his party, was easily persuaded into the belief of this last head of the accusation, and prevailed upon to grant them leave to choose a new bishop of Alexandria. They lost no time, but, assembling at Antioch, named one Pistus to that see, an Egyptian priest of their sect, who, together with the bishop that ordained him, had been condemned by St Alexander and by the council of Nice; but Pope Julius rejected his communion, and all other Catholic churches pronounced anathemas against him; nor was he ever able to get possession of the patriarchal chair. St Athanasius called a council of about a hundred bishops at Alexandria to defend the Catholic faith; after which he repaired to Rome to Pope Julius, to whom this council sent letters and deputies. Here the pope acquitted him in a council of fifty bishops, held in 341, and confirmed him in his see; but he was obliged to continue at Rome three years, during which the Arians carried on everything by violence in the East. The same year a council

<sup>1</sup> De Vitâ Constant. lib. iv. c. 71.

met at Antioch to the dedication of the great church, called the Golden Church, and framed twenty-five canons of discipline. After the departure of the orthodox prelates, the Arians framed a canon levelled against St Athanasius, that if a bishop who had been deposed in a council, whether justly or unjustly, should return to his church without the authority of a greater council than that which had deposed him, he should never hope to be re-established nor have his cause admitted to a hearing. They then named Gregory, a Cappadocian, and placed him by force of arms in the see of Alexandria in 341. The emperor Constans, in 345, invited St Athanasius to Milan; and, by earnest letters, obliged his brother Constantius to join with him in assembling a general council of the East and West at Sardica, in Illyricum. It met in May 347, and consisted of three hundred bishops of the West and seventy-six of the East, according to Socrates and Sozomen; but, according to St Athanasius, only of one hundred and seventy, besides the Eusebians; which agrees nearly with Theodoret, who reckons them in all two hundred and fifty. They were collected out of thirty-five provinces, besides the Orientals. This is reputed a general council, and is proved such by Natalis Alexander, though commonly looked upon only as an appendix to that of Nice. St Athanasius, Marcellus of Ancyra, and Asclepas of Gaza, were acquitted. They and some others of the eastern empire were present. But the Arian Orientals made a body apart, being fourscore in number, who having formed several assemblies in certain places by the way, on their arrival at Sardica refused, as they had agreed before they came, to join the other prelates, alleging the presence of Athanasius and other such frivolous pretences; and at length, upon an intimation of the threats of the synod if they did not appear, and if the Eusebians did not justify themselves of the matters laid to their charge, they all fled by night and held a pretended council at Philippopolis, as St Hilary, in his Fragments, and Socrates testify. Dr Cave alleges that they dated their acts at Sardica; but this they did only to usurp the venerable name of that synod; for at the same time they quote the synodal epistle of the prelates who remained at Sardica, before the date of which epistle all historians testify that they had left that city. The true council excommunicated the chiefs of the Eusebians, with Gregory the Cappadocian, forbidding all Catholic bishops to hold communication with them. This council sent two deputies to Constantius to press the execution of its decrees. The emperor Constans wrote to him also, both before and after the council, to acquaint him that unless he restored Athanasius to his see and punished his calumniators he would do it by force of arms. Gregory the Cappadocian, who had with the Arian governors exercised a most bloody persecution against the Catholics, and among others had caused to be beaten to death the holy confessor St Potamon, dying four months after the council of Sardica, facilitated our saint's return to Alexandria, and

deprived the emperor of all pretexts for hindering or delaying it. Constantius had also upon his hands an unsuccessful war against the Persians, and dreaded the threats of a civil war from his brother. Therefore he wrote thrice to the holy prelate, entreating him to hasten his return to Alexandria. St Athanasius, at the request of Constans, went first to him, then residing in Gaul, and probably at Milan, and thence to Rome, to take leave of Pope Julius and his church. He took Antioch on his way home, where he found Constantius, who treated him with great courtesy, and only desired that he would allow the Arians one church in Alexandria. The saint answered that he hoped that, in that case, the same favour might be granted to the Catholics at Antioch who adhered to Eustathius; but this not being relished by the Arians, Constantius insisted no longer on that point, but recommended Athanasius, in very strong terms, to his governors in Egypt. In the meantime, the zealous and pious emperor Constans was treacherously slain by Magnentius, in Gaul, in January 350. Nevertheless, Constantius restored Athanasius, who immediately assembled a council at Alexandria, and confirmed the decrees of that of Sardica. St Maximus did the same in a numerous synod at Jerusalem. Many Arian bishops on this occasion retracted their calumnies against the holy man, and also their heresy, among whom were Ursacius and Valens: but they soon returned to the vomit.

Magnentius usurped the empire in Italy, Gaul, and Africa, and Vetrannio in Pannonia. Constantius marched into the West against them. He made himself master of Vetrannio's person by a stratagem, and his army defeated Magnentius near Mursa, in Pannonia, in 351, and that tyrant fell soon after by his own sword. Whilst Constantius resided at Sirmium, in 351, a council was held in that city, consisting chiefly of oriental bishops, most of them Arians. Photinus, bishop of that see, who renewed the heresy of Sabellius, and affirmed Christ to be no more than a mere man, having been already condemned by two councils at Milan, was here excommunicated, deposed, and banished by the emperor. The profession of faith drawn up in this synod is commonly esteemed orthodox, and called the first confession of Sirmium. The Arians had never ceased to prepossess the credulous emperor against Athanasius, whose active zeal was their terror; and that prince was no sooner at liberty, by seeing the whole empire in his own hands, than he began again to persecute him. He procured him to be condemned by certain Arian bishops at Arles in 353, and again at Milan in 355, where he declared himself his accuser, and banished the Catholic bishops who refused to subscribe his condemnation, as SS. Eusebius of Vercelli, Dionysius of Milan, Paulinus of Triers, &c. He sent a chamberlain to obtain of Pope Liberius the confirmation of this unjust sentence; but he rejected the proposal with indignation, though enforced with presents and threats.

Liberius not only refused the presents which were brought him, but when the messenger sought means to deposit them as an offering in St Peter's church, unknown to the pope, he threw them out of doors. Constantius hereupon sent for him under a strict guard to Milan, where, in a conference recorded by Theodoret, he boldly told Constantius that Athanasius had been acquitted at Sardica, and his enemies proved calumniators and impostors, and that it was unjust to condemn a person who could not be legally convicted of any crime; the emperor was reduced to silence on every article; but being the more out of patience, ordered him, unless he complied within three days, to go into banishment to Berœa, in Thrace. He sent him, indeed, five hundred pieces of gold to bear his charges, but Liberius refused them, saying he might bestow them on his flatterers; as he did also a like present from the empress, bidding the messenger learn to believe in Christ, and not to persecute the Church of God. After three days were expired he departed into exile, in 356. Constantius, going to Rome to celebrate the twentieth year of his reign, in 357, the ladies joined in a petition to him that he would restore Liberius, who had been then two years in banishment. He assented upon condition that he should comply with the bishops then at court. About this time Liberius began to sink under the hardships of his exile, and his resolution was shaken by the continual solicitations of Demophilus, the Arian bishop of Berœa, and of Fortunatian, the temporizing Bishop of Aquileia. He was so far softened, by listening to flatteries and suggestions to which he ought to have stopped his ears with horror, that he yielded to the snare laid for him, to the great scandal of the church. He subscribed the condemnation of St Athanasius, and a confession or creed, which had been framed by the Arians at Sirmium, though their heresy was not expressed in it; and he wrote to the Arian bishops of the East that he had received the true Catholic faith which many bishops had approved at Sirmium. The fall of so great a prelate and so illustrious a confessor is a terrifying example of human weakness, which no one can call to mind without trembling for himself. St Peter fell by a presumptuous confidence in his own strength and resolution, that we may learn that everyone stands only by humility. Liberius, however, speedily imitated the repentance of the prince of the apostles. And he no sooner had recovered his see than he again loudly declared himself the patron of justice and truth; and when the council of Rimini was betrayed into a prevarication which was construed in favour of Arianism, Liberius vigorously opposed the danger, and by his strenuous active zeal averted the desolation with which it threatened many churches, as Theodoret testifies.<sup>1</sup>

Constantius, not content to have banished the bishops who favoured Athanasius, also threatened and punished all the officers and magistrates

<sup>1</sup> Theodoret, Hist. lib. ii. c. 17.



who refused to join in communion with the Arians. Whilst his presence in the West filled it with confusion and acts of tyranny, St Athanasius was at Alexandria, offering up to God most fervent prayers for the defence of the faith. Constantius next turned all his rage against him and against the city of Alexandria, sending orders to Syrianus, the duke, that is, general of the troops of Egypt, to persecute the archbishop and his clergy. He likewise despatched two notaries to see his orders executed. They endeavoured to oblige the saint to leave the city. He answered that he had returned to his see and had resided there till that time by the emperor's express order; and therefore could not leave it without a command of equal authority (which they owned was not in their power to produce), or unless Syrianus, the duke, or Maximus, the prefect or governor, would give him such an order in writing, which neither of them would do. Syrianus, convinced of the justice of his plea, promised to give neither him nor the public assemblies of his people any further disturbance without express injunction from the emperor to that effect. Twenty-three days after this solemn promise, confirmed by oath, the faithful were assembled at the church of St Theonas, where they passed the night in prayer, on account of a festival to be celebrated the next day. Syrianus, conducted by the Arians, surrounded the church at midnight with above five hundred soldiers, who, having forced open the doors, committed the greatest disorders. The patriarch, however, kept his chair; and, being determined not to desert his flock in their distress, ordered a deacon to sing the 136th psalm, and the people to repeat alternately: "For his mercy endureth for ever." After this he directed them to depart and make the best of their way to their own houses, protesting that he would be the last that left that place. Accordingly, when the greatest part of the people were gone out, and the rest were following, the clergy and monks that were left forced the patriarch out along with them; whom, though almost stifled to death, they conveyed safe through the guards and secured him out of their reach. Numbers on this occasion were trampled to death by the soldiers or slain by their darts. This relation is given by the saint in his apology for his flight, and in his History of the Arians, addressed to the monks. The next step of the Arians was to fix a trusty man of their party in this important see; and the person they pitched upon was one George, who had been victualler to the army, one of the most brutish and cruel of men, who was accordingly placed in the patriarchal chair. His roughness and savage temper made him seem the fittest instrument to oppress the Catholics, and he renewed all the scenes of bloodshed and violence of which Gregory had set the example, as Theodoret relates. Our holy bishop hereupon retired into the deserts of Egypt; but was not permitted to enjoy long the conversation of the devout inhabitants of those parts, who, according to the expression of St Gregory Nazianzen,

lived only to God. His enemies having set a price upon his head, the wildernesses were ransacked by soldiers in quest of him, and the monks persecuted, who were determined rather to suffer death than to discover where he lay concealed. The saint, apprehensive of their suffering on his account, left them, and retired to a more remote and solitary place, where he had scarce air to breathe in, and saw none but the person that supplied him with necessaries and brought him his letters, though not without great danger and difficulty.

Constantius died on the 3rd of November in 361; a prince whose memory will be eternally infamous for his heresy and persecution of the church, his dissimulation, levity, and inconstancy, his weakness of mind, and the treacherous murder of all his uncles. The year following, George, the Arian usurper of the see of Alexandria, was massacred by the Pagans for his cruelty. Thus was Athanasius delivered from all his chief enemies. Julian the Apostate, on coming to the empire, granted all the bishops who had been banished by Constantius the liberty to return to their respective churches—not out of any goodwill he bore them, but with a view, as his own historian writes, to increase their divisions by this licence, and lessen his fears for their uniting against him: also to reflect an odium on the memory and proceedings of his predecessor. Most of the orthodox bishops took their advantage of this permission; and the usurper of the see of Alexandria being massacred by the Pagans in July 362, our saint returned to his flock in August, after an absence of above six years. His entrance was a kind of triumph of the Catholic faith over its enemies, and the citizens hereupon drove the Arians out of all the churches.

In 359 the council of Rimini had the weakness so far to yield to the artifices of the Arians as to omit in the creed the word consubstantial. The prelates were afterwards surprised to see the triumph of the Arians on that account, and were struck with remorse for their unwary condescension. Their fall was owing, not to any error in faith, but to a want of courage and insight into the artifices of the Arians. Nevertheless, Lucifer of Cagliari and some other bishops pretended, by a Pharisaical pride, that the lapsed, notwithstanding their repentance, could no longer be admitted by the church to communion in the ranks of bishops or priests. St Athanasius, on the contrary, being filled with the spirit of tenderness which our divine Redeemer exercised and recommended to be shown towards sincere penitents, condemned this excessive severity; and in 362 assembled a council at Alexandria, at which assisted St Eusebius of Vercelli, in his return from his banishment in Thebais, St Asterius of Petra, &c. This synod condemned those who denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and decreed that the authors of the Arian heresy should be deposed, and upon their repentance received only to the lay-communion; but that those prelates who had fallen into it only by compulsion, and for

a short time, should, upon their repentance, retain their sees. This decision was adopted in Macedonia, Achaia, Spain, Gaul, &c., and approved at Rome.<sup>1</sup> For we learn from St Hilary that Liberius, who died in 366, had established this discipline in Italy, and we have his letter to the Catholic bishops of that country, in which he approves what had been regulated in this regard in Achaia and Egypt, and exhorts them to exert their zeal against the authors of their fault in proportion to the grief they felt for having committed it.<sup>2</sup>

Theodoret says that the priests of the idols complained to Julian that if Athanasius was suffered to remain in Alexandria there would not remain one adorer of the gods in that city. Julian, having received this advice, answered their complaint, telling them that, though he had allowed the Galileans (his name of derision for Christians) to return to their own country, he had not given them leave to enter on the possession of their churches; and that Athanasius in particular, who had been banished by the orders of several emperors, ought not to have done this; he therefore ordered him immediately to leave the city on the receipt of his letter, under the penalty of a severer punishment. He even dispatched a messenger to kill him. The saint comforted his flock, and having recommended them to the ablest of his friends, with an assurance that this storm would soon blow over, embarked in a boat on the river for Thebais. He who had orders to kill him, hearing that he was fled, sailed after him with great expedition. The saint, having timely notice of it, was advised by those that accompanied him to turn aside into the deserts that bordered on the Nile. But St Athanasius ordered them to tack about and fall down the river towards Alexandria; "to show," said he, "that our protector is more powerful than our persecutor." Meeting the pursuivant, he asked them whether they had seen Athanasius as they came down the river, and was answered that he was not far off, and that if they made haste they would quickly come up with him. Upon this the assassin continued the pursuit, while St Athanasius got safe and unsuspected to Alexandria, where he lay hid for some time. But upon a fresh order coming from Julian for his death, he withdrew into the deserts of Thebais, going from place to place to avoid falling into the hands of his enemy. St Theodorus of Tabenna, being come to visit him while at Antinoë with St Pammon, put an end to his apprehensions on this score by assuring him, on a revelation God had favoured him with, that Julian had just then expired in Persia, where he was killed on the 27th of June, in 363. The holy hermit acquainted him also that the reign of his Christian successor would be very short. This was Jovian, who, being chosen emperor, refused to accept that dignity till the army had declared for the Christian religion.

<sup>1</sup> Conc. t. vii. pp. 73 and 680.

<sup>2</sup> S. Hil. fragm. 12, p. 1357; Constant. op. decret. 13, p. 448.

He was no sooner placed upon the throne but he wrote to St Athanasius cancelling the sentence of his banishment and praying him to resume the government of his church, adding high commendations of his virtue and unshaken constancy. St Athanasius waited not for the emperor's orders to quit his retreat, but on being apprized, as before related, of the death of his persecutor, appeared on a sudden and resumed his usual functions in the midst of his people, who were joyfully surprised at the sight of him. The emperor, well knowing that he was the chief person that had stood up in defence of the Christian faith, besought him by a second letter to send him a full account in writing of its doctrines, and some rules for his conduct and behaviour in what regarded the affairs of the church. St Athanasius called a synod of learned bishops and returned an answer in their name; recommending that he should hold inviolable the doctrine explained in the Council of Nice, this being the faith of the apostles, which had been preached in all ages, and was generally professed throughout the Christian world, "some few excepted," says he, "who embrace the opinions of Arius." The Arians attempted in vain to alter his favourable dispositions towards the saint by renewing their old calumnies. Not satisfied with his instructions by letters, he desired to see him; and the holy bishop was received by him at Antioch with all possible tokens of affection and esteem; but after giving him holy advice, he hastened back to Alexandria. The good Emperor Jovian reigned only eight months, dying on the 17th of February in 364. Valentinian, his successor, chose to reside in the West, and making his brother Valens partner in the empire, assigned to him the East. Valens was inclined to Arianism, and openly declared in favour of it in 367, when he received baptism from the hands of Eudoxus, bishop of the Arians, at Constantinople. The same year he published an edict for the banishment of all those bishops who had been deprived of their sees by Constantius. Theodoret says this was the fifth time that St Athanasius had been driven from his church. He had been employed in visiting the churches, monasteries, and deserts of Egypt. Upon the news of this new tempest the people of Alexandria rose in tumults, demanding of the governor of the province that they might be allowed to enjoy their bishop, and he promised to write to the emperor. St Athanasius, seeing the sedition appeased, stole privately out of the town, and hid himself in the country in the vault in which his father was interred, where he lay four months, according to Sozomen. The very night after he withdrew, the governor and the general of the troops took possession of the church in which he usually performed his functions, but were not able to find him. As soon as his departure was known the city was filled with lamentation, the people vehemently calling on the governor for the return of their pastor. The fear of a sedition moved Valens at length to grant them that satisfaction, and to write to Alexandria that he might

abide there in peace, in the free possession of the churches. In 369, the holy patriarch convened a council of ninety bishops, in whose name he wrote to the bishops of Africa to beware of any surprise from those who were for preferring the decrees of the Council of Rimini to those of Nice.

In those perilous time God raised up many holy pastors, whom he animated with his spirit and strengthened in the defence of his truth. Among these St Athanasius was the most illustrious champion. By his undaunted courage and unparalleled greatness of soul under the most violent persecutions, he merited a crown equal to that of the most glorious martyrs; by his erudition, eloquence, and writings he holds an illustrious place among the principal doctors of the church; and by the example of his virtue, by which he rivalled the most renowned anchorets of the deserts and the most holy confessors, he stemmed the torrent of scandal and iniquity which threatened to bear down all before it.

St Gregory Nazianzen gives the following portrait of his virtues in private life. "He was most humble and lowly in mind, as his virtue was most sublime and inimitable. He was most courteous to all, and everyone had easy access to him; he was meek, gentle, compassionate, amiable in his discourse, but much more so in his life; of an angelical disposition; mild in his reproofs, and instructive in his commendations; in both which he observed such even measures that his reproof spoke the kindness of a father and his commendation the authority of a master; and neither was his indulgence over tender nor his severity harsh. His life supplied the place of sermons, and his sermons prevented correction. In him all ranks might find enough to admire and enough to imitate; one might commend his unwearied austerity in fasting and prayer; another his perseverance in watching and the divine praises; a third his admirable care of the poor; a fourth his courage in checking the injustice of the rich or his condescension to the humble." Thus St Gregory Nazianzen,<sup>1</sup> who says he was a loadstone to dissenters, drawing them to his opinion unless hardened in malice; and always at least raising in them a secret reverence and veneration for his person; but that he was an adamant to his persecutors; no more capable of impressions against justice than a rock of marble is of yielding to any slight touch. After innumerable combats and as many great victories, this glorious saint, having governed the church of Alexandria forty-six years, was called to a life exempt from labour and suffering on the 2nd of May, on a Thursday, according to the Oriental Chronicle of the Copthes, in the year 373, as is clear from the same author, St Proterius, and St Jerom; not in 371, as Socrates mistakes.

The humility, modesty, and charity of this great saint; his invincible meekness towards his enemies, who were the most implacable and basest

<sup>1</sup> Or. xxi. p. 378.

of men, and the heroic fortitude, patience, and zeal by which he triumphed over the persecutions of almost the whole world confederated against him, and of four emperors, Constantine, Constantius, Julian, and Valens, three of whom employed wiles, stratagems, and hypocrisy, and sometimes open force to destroy him; these, I say, and all other eminent virtues, have rendered his name venerable in the church to the latest ages, which he ceases not to instruct and edify by his writings.

*The following feast is celebrated on May 2 :*

ST ATHANASIUS, Bishop of Alexandria, one of the four great doctors of the Greek Church.

MAY 3

## THE DISCOVERY OF THE HOLY CROSS

(A.D. 326)

[From St Cyril of Jerusalem, cat. 10. St Paulinus, Ep. 31, p. 193. St Sulpicius Severus, St Ambrose, St Chrysostom, Rufinus, Theodoret, Socrates, and Sozomen. See Tillemont, t. vii. p. 6, on St Helena.]

GOD having restored peace to his church by exalting Constantine the Great to the imperial throne, that pious prince, who had triumphed over his enemies by the miraculous power of the Cross, was very desirous of expressing his veneration for the holy places which had been honoured and sanctified by the presence and sufferings of our blessed Redeemer on earth. He accordingly came to a resolution to build a magnificent church in the city of Jerusalem, as the place which had been most honoured by the presence, the instructions and miracles of the Son of God. St Helena, the emperor's mother, out of a desire of visiting the holy places there, undertook a journey into Palestine in 326, though at that time near eighty years of age; and on her arrival at Jerusalem was inspired with a great desire to find the identical cross on which Christ had suffered for our sins. But there was no mark or tradition, even amongst the Christians, where it lay. The heathens, out of an aversion to Christianity, had done what they could to conceal the place where our Saviour was buried. They had heaped upon it a great quantity of stones and rubbish, besides building a temple to Venus, that those who came hither to adore him might seem to pay their worship to a marble idol representing this false deity. They had, moreover, erected a statue of Jupiter in the place where our Saviour rose from the dead, as we are informed by St Jerom; which figure continued there from the Emperor Adrian's time to Constantine's; which precautions of the persecutors show the veneration which Christians paid from the beginning to the instruments of our Redemption. Helena, being willing to spare no pains to compass her pious design, consulted all people at Jerusalem and near it whom she thought likely to assist

her in finding out the cross; and was credibly informed that if she could find out the sepulchre she would likewise find the instruments of the punishment; it being always the custom among the Jews to make a great hole near the place where the body of the criminal was buried, and to throw into it whatever belonged to his execution, looking upon all these things as detestable objects, and which for that reason ought to be removed out of sight. The pious empress therefore ordered the profane buildings to be pulled down, the statues to be broken in pieces, and the rubbish to be removed; and upon digging to a great depth, they discovered the holy sepulchre, and near it three crosses, also the nails which had pierced our Saviour's body, and the title which had been fixed to his cross. By this discovery they understood that one of the three crosses was that which they were in quest of, and that the other two belonged to the two malefactors between whom our Saviour had been crucified. But, whereas the title was found separate from the cross, a difficulty remained to distinguish which of three was that on which our Divine Redeemer consummated his sacrifice for the salvation of the world. In this perplexity the holy bishop, Macarius, knowing that one of the principal ladies of the city lay extremely ill, suggested to the empress to cause the three crosses to be carried to the sick person, not doubting but God would discover which was the cross they sought for. This being done, St Macarius prayed that God would have regard to their faith, and after his prayer, applied the crosses singly to the patient, who was immediately and perfectly recovered by the touch of one of the three crosses, the other two having been tried without effect. St Helena, full of joy for having found the treasure which she had so earnestly sought and so highly esteemed, built a church on the spot and lodged it there with great veneration, having provided an extraordinary rich case for it. She afterwards carried part of it to the Emperor Constantine, then at Constantinople, who received it with great veneration, another part she sent, or rather carried it to Rome, to be placed in the church which she built there, called Of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, where it remains to this day. The discovery of the cross must have happened about the month of May, or early in the spring; for St Helena went the same year to Constantinople, and from thence to Rome, where she died in the arms of her son on the 18th of August 326, as Pagi demonstrates from Eusebius and Gotheфридus. The title was sent by St Helena to the same church in Rome, and deposited on the top of an arch, where it was found in a case of lead in 1492, as may be read at length by Bozius. The inscription in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin is in red letters, and the wood was whitened. Thus it was in 1492; but these colours have since faded. Also the words *Jesus* and *Judæorum* are eaten away. The board is nine, but must have been twelve, inches long.

The main part of the cross St Helena inclosed in a silver shrine, and

committed it to the care of St Macarius, that it might be delivered down to posterity as an object of veneration. It was accordingly kept with singular care and respect in the magnificent church which she and her son built in Jerusalem. See the lives of St Cyril of Jerusalem, St Porphyrius of Gaza, &c. St Paulinus, in his epistle to Severus,<sup>1</sup> relates that though chips were almost daily cut off from it and given to devout persons, yet the sacred wood suffered thereby no diminution. It is affirmed by St Cyril of Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> twenty-five years after the discovery, that pieces of the cross were spread all over the earth. He compares this wonder to the miraculous feeding of five thousand men, as recorded in the gospel. Read Gretzer, *On the Cross*. The stately church which Constantine the Great built at Jerusalem, the rich ornaments of which are mentioned by Eusebius,<sup>3</sup> was called The Basilic of the Holy Cross, because it possessed this precious treasure; the keeper of which was always a venerable priest. It was shown publicly to the people at Easter. The same was also called The Church of the Sepulchre, or of the Resurrection; though this was properly only the title of the holy chapel in it which stood over the sepulchre or cavern in which our Saviour was buried, which was in the garden adjoining to Mount Calvary: so that this great church covered the sepulchre, and was extended so far on Mount Calvary as also to include the rock Golgotha, and the very place where the cross of Christ stood at his crucifixion. This extensive building was inclosed within the walls of Jerusalem when that city was rebuilt. Constantine also built a church upon Mount Olivet over the spot from which our Saviour ascended into heaven. This place was venerated by Christians from the very time of his death, as much as the fear of their enemies would permit. And this may account for the industry of the pagans in filling up the sepulchre or cavern with stones, heaping rubbish over it to a considerable height, and setting up the most infamous of their idols over it, that the Christians might seem to worship a Venus when they came hither to pay their homage to Jesus Christ. We find the Festival of the Invention, or the Discovery of the Cross, solemnized in the Latin Church ever since the fifth or sixth century. The finding of the cross by St Helena happened in the year of our Lord 326, in the twenty-first year of Constantine's reign, the thirteenth of the pontificate of Sylvester, and the first after the Council of Nice. The feast of the Exaltation of the Cross was kept in May, from the time that it was triumphantly placed by St Helena in the church at Jerusalem, upon its discovery in 326, which continued to the year 335, when the great church of the Resurrection was built at Jerusalem by the orders of Constantine the Great, and dedicated on the 13th of September that year, as St Sophronius (*Or. de Exalt. S. Crucis in Bibl. Patr. Colon. t. vii.*), Nicephorus, and the Typic of St Sabas mention. The cross was

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 12.<sup>2</sup> Cat. 4, 10, 3.<sup>3</sup> Vit. Constant. 1, 3.



exalted or set up in that church the day following, which was Sunday. Hence both the Greeks and Latins kept this feast on the 14th of September; and St Chrysostom's death is related to have happened on this festival. After the recovery of the cross by Heraclius, this festival began to be kept in the Eastern Church with great solemnity and a fast. At Jerusalem the cross was shown to the people to be adored on Easter Monday, and also in the middle of Lent, as we learn from St Sophronius, St Paulinus, &c. In the Latin Church this was celebrated on the 3rd of May; whether this was the day of the Discovery of the Cross by St Helena, or of Constantine's vision or victory, or of the dedication of the church of the Holy Cross in Rome, is uncertain.

The cross was chosen by our dear Redeemer to be the glorious instrument of his victory and triumph over the devil and sin; and by his death thereon he has purchased for us redemption, grace, and glory. The cross is his holy standard, under which all his followers fight his battles; and, according to the holy fathers, will be borne before him in a triumphant manner when he shall come in glory to judge the world. The church professes a very high regard and veneration for this mysterious and salutary sign, giving it an honourable place in her churches, making frequent use of it in her holy offices, in the administration of the sacraments, and on many other occasions; in which particulars she imitates the earliest and purest ages of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> It is the remark of St Jerom, "that if the ark was held in such high veneration among the Jews, how much more ought the Christians to respect the wood of the cross whereon our Saviour offered himself a bleeding victim for our sins?" By devoutly respecting the sign of the cross we profess our faith in Christ, who was crucified for us; we excite our hope in his merits, kindle his love in our breasts, renew the remembrance of his sacred death, and inflame our meditations on his adorable passion, in which we learn all virtue and all spiritual knowledge. What obedience are we here taught! seeing Christ himself "learned obedience from those things which he suffered."<sup>2</sup> What love of God and our neighbour! seeing Jesus has sprinkled his cross with his blood to seal his new alliance of charity, and to inculcate his own law and a new commandment. What patience do we here learn! What meekness and humility! the two things which Jesus commands us particularly to learn of him. And it is on the cross and in his sacred passion that he has principally set us the most moving example, and pressed upon us the most endearing precepts of these virtues. Whence assiduous meditation on the sufferings of Christ is the great school of Christian perfection. All the saints found it their comfort and their joy; in it they continually feasted their souls with the most sweet fruits of love and devotion; in it they learnt to die perfectly to themselves, and entered

<sup>1</sup> See Tert. de Coron. Militis.

<sup>2</sup> Hebr. v. 8.

into the sentiments of Christ crucified;<sup>1</sup> here they stirred up their souls to perfect compunction; and, placing themselves in spirit under the cross of their Divine Redeemer, they offered their tears and earnest supplications to the Father, through the Son, who made himself our sacrifice on this tree: "I have seated myself under the shade of him whom I desired, and his fruit was sweet to my palate."<sup>2</sup> Where did St Bernard learn his eminent spirit of devotion but in the meditation on Christ's sufferings? Where did the glorious St Austin glean his spiritual science but, as he himself tells us, in the wounds of his Redeemer? It was in them that the admirable St Francis conceived his seraphic ardours. St Thomas Aquinas studied his sacred science and virtue in the book of the cross, and always had recourse to God at the foot of the crucifix. "St Bonaventure seems," says St Francis of Sales, "when he writes the spiritual breathings of his heart, all inflamed with love; to have no other paper than the cross, no other pen than the lance, no other ink than what is dipped in the precious blood of Christ. With what feeling sentiments did he cry out, It is good always to abide in spirit before the cross! Let us make to ourselves three tabernacles in the wounds of our crucified Redeemer, one in his feet, another in his hands, and a third in his sacred side. Here will I rest; here will I watch; here will I read; here will I converse."<sup>3</sup> St Paul, who was very learned, esteemed all his other science as nothing, and looked on the knowledge of Jesus Christ crucified as his only learning. "I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." By being instructed in this mystery, and having the sentiments of Christ crucified deeply impressed upon his heart, he knew all that he wished to know; it was his only solicitude and desire daily to improve himself in this one science. The same apostle, in the transport of his ardent love of the cross, cried out: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup> To glory in a thing is to love it, to esteem it, to place it in our greatness and happiness. "Everyone glories in those things in which he places his greatness," as St Thomas says. The sacred passion of Christ is the source of all our happiness and good, and the perfect model and school of virtue. If it be the tender object of our devotion, if we love, and desire always to meditate on our Redeemer crucified for us, the sacred instrument of his triumph, the ensign and trophy of his precious victory, and the principal emblem of his sufferings which it represents to us, and strongly paints before our eyes, must be always dear and most amiable to us.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 3:*

ST ALEXANDER, who succeeded St Evaristus as pope in 109, and is ranked among the martyrs in the Canon of the Mass. He suffered in 119 with or about the same time as Eventius and Theodulus: and THE DISCOVERY OF THE HOLY CROSS, one of the most ancient devotions of the Christian Church.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 5.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cant. ii. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. vi. 14.

<sup>3</sup> St. Bonav. 1 de Vita Christi.

## MAY 4

## ST MONICA, WIDOW

(A.D. 387)

[From St Austin's works, collected by Tillemont, t. viii. p. 455, and Berti, lib. de Rebus Gestis S. Aug. Venetiis. an. 1756, in App. de S. Monica.]

THE Church is doubly indebted, under God, to the saint of this day, namely, for the birth, and still more so for the conversion, of the great St Austin, who was more beholden to St Monica for his spiritual life by grace than for his corporeal life by his birth and education. She was born in 332, in a pious family, and early instructed in the fear of God. She often professed her singular obligations to a virtuous, discreet maid-servant, whom her parents intrusted with the education of their children, and who instilled into them maxims of piety, restrained the least sallies of their passions, and by her prudence, words, and example inspired them with an early sense and love of every duty. She was so strict in regard to her charge that, besides making them observe great temperance in their meals, she would not allow them to drink even water at any other times, how great thirst soever they might pretend. She used to say, "You are now for drinking water; but when you come to be mistress of the cellar, water will be despised, but the habit of drinking will stick by you."

As soon as marriageable she was disposed of to one Patricius, a citizen of Tagaste, a man of honour and probity, but an idolater. She obeyed and served him as her master, and laboured to gain him to God; though the chief argument she used whereby to reclaim him from his vices was the sanctity of her conduct, enforced by an obliging, affectionate behaviour, by which she commanded his love, respect, and esteem. She had by him two sons, Austin and Navigius, and one daughter. She tolerated the injuries done by him to her marriage-bed in such manner as never to make him the least bitter reproach on that subject. As on the one side he was very good-natured and loving, so on the other he was hasty and cholerick. Monica never thwarted him by the least action or word whilst she saw him in anger; but when the fit was over and he was calm, she mildly gave him her reasons and an account of her actions. When she saw other wives bearing the marks of their husband's anger on their disfigured faces, and heard them blaming their roughness of temper or debaucheries, she would answer them, "Lay the blame rather on yourselves and your tongues." Her example alone was a sufficient proof; for, notwithstanding the passionate temper of her husband, it was never known that he ever struck her, or that they had ever, for so much as one day, entertained any domestic dissension; because she bore all his sallies

with patience and great silence, made no other return but that of a greater obsequiousness, and waited an opportunity to make him sensible of his mistake when that was necessary. And as many as followed her advice in this respect towards their husbands rejoiced in the experience of the comfort and advantages which accrued to them from their patience and complaisance; while those that did not follow it continued still in their vexations and sufferings. One of the happy fruits Monica reaped from her patience was her husband's conversion to Christ; who thereupon became chaste and faithful in all the duties of a good Christian; he died the year after he had been baptized. By mildness she also gained, both to her own interest and to Christ, her froward mother-in-law. Our saint had an excellent talent at making peace among neighbours when any falling out had happened among them; on which occasion, such was the energy and the spirit of tender charity with which she delivered herself that she seemed instructed by her interior Master in what she said. It was her great delight to serve the poor, supplying their wants with cheerfulness and liberality. She assisted daily at the holy oblation of the altar, and never failed to go to church twice a day, morning and night, to assist at public prayer and the dispensation of the divine word, having eternity always in her thought. She studied to imitate the actions of the saints who were in possession of immortal bliss; and, full of confidence in their intercession, she often visited the tombs of the martyrs.<sup>1</sup> She well knew that, in matters relating to religion and a Christian life, nothing should be looked upon as trifling and insignificant; and that the least actions become great when done for God and with great fervour. Her exercises of piety did not hinder her attention in watching over the education of her children, in which God Almighty gave her great occasion of merit and suffering, particularly in Austin, that he might more amply crown her care in the end. He was born in November 354. As he grew up, she endeavoured continually to instil into him sentiments of piety, but fell into an unperceived passion and immoderate desire that he should excel in learning; though she flattered herself that she regarded this only as a means whereof he might one day make a good use to the honour of God. Her husband earnestly desired the same thing, because he looked upon it as the greatest step whereby his son could raise himself in the world. In his infancy she had ranked him among the catechumens; and once, in an illness, all things were prepared for his baptism, but it was deferred.

Patricius died about the year 371. Austin, who was then seventeen years of age, still continued his studies at Carthage, where, in 373, he was seduced by the Manichees and drawn into that heresy.<sup>2</sup> Monica, being informed of his misfortune, grieved more bitterly for his spiritual

<sup>1</sup> St Aug. Conf. lib. vi. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Conf. lib. iii. c. 4.

death than worldly mothers do when they see their children carried to their graves; nor would she suffer him to live under the same roof with her or to eat at the same table. "You have heard her vows," says St Austin, addressing himself to God, "and you have not despised her tears, for she shed torrents in your presence, in all places where she offered to you her prayer." His divine Majesty was pleased to give her an assurance that she was heard, by a dream, in which she seemed to herself standing on a rule of wood, very sorrowful; and that a young man shining with light asked her the cause of her grief and bade her dry up her tears, saying "Your son is with you." Then, casting her eyes towards the place he pointed at, she saw Austin standing on the rule with her. She told her son this dream, and upon his inferring from it that she should come over to his sentiments in matters of religion, "No," said she, "it was not told me that I was with you, but that you was with me." This, her quick answer, made a great impression on her son, who after his conversion considered it as a divine admonition. She was so much comforted by it that she again permitted him to eat and live with her. This happened about the end of the year 377, almost nine years before his conversion, in August 386. During all this time the holy widow continued her prayers for his conversion, and her sighs and tears, which nothing but his baptism at Milan could dry up. She engaged virtuous and learned prelates to speak to him. One who had himself been brought up a Manichee, and had been converted by reading their own books, excused himself, saying, "The heart of the youth was yet too indocile, but that God's time would come." She urged him with greater importunity: at last the good old bishop answered her, "Go: continue to do as you do; it is impossible that a child of such tears should perish": which words she received as an oracle from heaven. Austin was twenty-nine years old when he determined to go to Rome with a view to teach rhetoric. She endeavoured to divert him from such a design, fearing it might delay his conversion; and followed him to the seaside, resolving either to bring him back or to bear him company into Italy. He feigned he had no intention to go, that he might rid himself of her importunity. But while she passed the night in a chapel of St Cyprian in the neighbourhood, he secretly set out. "I deceived her with a lie," says St Austin, "while she was weeping and praying for me: and what did she ask of you, my God, but that you would not suffer me to sail away? But you graciously heard her main desire, namely, that I might be engaged in your service, and refused to grant what she asked then in order to give what she always asked." Next morning, coming to the seaside and finding him gone, she was seized with a grief not to be expressed. God, by this extreme affliction, would punish her too human tenderness, and his wisdom suffered her son to be carried by his passions to the place where he had decreed to heal them.

Upon his arrival at Rome he fell dangerously sick; and he attributes his recovery to the prayers of his mother, though she did not then know his situation; out of a favourable regard to whose petitions God would not cut him off in his impenitence. From Rome he went to teach rhetoric at Milan in 384, and being convinced by St Ambrose of the errors of his sect, renounced that heresy, yet without being fixed in the truth, continuing his search after it in a fluctuating state of mind. Monica followed him, and in a great storm at sea comforted the sailors, assuring them, from a vision, that they would certainly reach the port. Finding him at Milan, she learned from his own mouth that he was no longer a Manichee; but she redoubled her tears and prayers to God to obtain his thorough conversion. She respected St Ambrose as the spiritual physician of his soul; and was herself wonderfully delighted with hearing his solid and beautiful discourses. St Ambrose forbid at Milan the custom of carrying bread and wine to the tombs of the martyrs; and Monica, going thither with her offerings, was stopped by the porter, and being informed that the custom had been forbid, she was more ready to condemn the practice in the simplicity of obedience than to inquire into the reasons of the prohibition. She therefore was content to carry to those holy places a heart full of pure and religious dispositions, reserving her alms for other occasions. To satisfy her scruple, St Austin consulted St Ambrose on the fast of the Saturday. She had been used to keep fast on that day, according to the custom of the church of Tagaste, which was also that of Rome, but at Milan this fast was not observed. She was therefore in doubt what she ought to do. The answer of St Ambrose, taken into the canon law, was: "When I am here I do not fast on the Saturday, but I fast when I am in Rome; do you the same, and follow always the custom and discipline of the churches where you are": which precept she obeyed. She had the joy to see St Austin perfectly converted in August 386. She had contrived a good match for him, which might be a bar against any relapse into his former disorders, but understood from him, with great satisfaction, that he was resolved to embrace a state of perpetual continency. When the vacation of the schools during the vintage came on, St Austin retired with his friends to a country house. His mother accompanied them, and had a great share in their learned entertainments, in which she, by her natural genius and constant conversation with God, showed an extraordinary penetration and judgment. St Austin has preserved many of her ingenious and pious reflections; the first he sometimes compares with the finest strokes of Tully and Hortensius, in his books, *On Order*, and in that, *On a Happy Life*.

St Austin was baptized at Easter in 387, with some of his friends, with whom he continued to live some time. St Monica took as much care of them all as if they had been her children, and paid them all a

deference as if each of them had been her father. They all set out together for Africa, but lost Monica on the road, who fell sick and died at Ostia, where they were to embark. Before her illness, conversing there with her son Austin concerning eternal happiness and the contempt of this world, she said to him, "Son, there is nothing now in this life that affords me any delight. What have I to do here any longer, or why I am here, I know not; all my hopes in this world being now at an end. The only thing for which I desired to live was that I might see you a Catholic and child of heaven. God has done much more in that I see you now despising all earthly felicity and entirely devoted to his service. What further business then have I here?" Another day, entertaining herself with her friends in the same place, she spoke so well on the happiness of death as much surprised them; and being asked if she was not afraid to be buried in a place so far from her country, she answered, "Nothing is far off from God. Neither do I need to fear that God will not find my body to raise it with the rest." Five days after this she was seized with a fever; and one day, being worse than ordinary, she swooned away, and was for a little while insensible.<sup>1</sup> Her two sons ran to her. When she came to herself, awaking as it were out of a profound sleep, she said to them, "Here you shall bury your mother." Austin stood silent; Navigius wished that she might not die abroad, but in her own country; but she, checking him with her eyes, said to them, "Lay this body anywhere; be not concerned about that. The only thing I ask of you both is, that you make remembrance of me at the altar of the Lord wheresoever you are." Her distemper growing stronger upon her, she suffered much; and on the ninth day of her illness, in the fifty-sixth year of her age and of our Lord 387, that religious and pious soul was loosed from the body. St Austin, who was then thirty-three years of age, closed her eyes and, though his grief was extreme, restrained his tears and those of his son, Adeodatus, thinking that weeping did not become the funeral of her who neither died miserably nor at all as to her principal and better part. The corpse was carried to the church, and when it was set down by the grave, according to the custom of the place, the sacrifice of our ransom was offered for her. St Austin had hitherto held in his tears; but calling to mind, when alone, her holy and pious conversation towards God, and her tender and affectionate love and care of her children, of which she was so suddenly deprived, he gave free scope to his tears. He adds: "If anyone think it a sin that I wept for my mother some small part of an hour; and a mother who many years had wept for me that I might live to thy eyes, O Lord; let him not deride me for it; but rather, if his charity be great, let him weep also for my sins before thee." He prays for her in his confessions, and beseeches God to inspire all who shall read his book

<sup>1</sup> St Aug. Conf. lib. ix. c. 11, 12, 13.

to remember at the altar Monica and Patricius. He says, "I pray for the sins of my mother: hear me by the remedy of our wounds, who hung on the cross, and sitting on the right hand, intercedes for us. I know she showed mercy, and forgave from her heart all debtors; forgive her also her debts." Her body was translated from Ostia to Rome in 1430, under Pope Martin V, and remains there in the church of St Austin. The history of this translation of the relics of St Monica to Rome, with an account of several miraculous cures with which it was honoured, is given by Pope Martin V himself.<sup>1</sup> Some pretend this to be the body of St Prima, and that the remains of St Monica are kept at Arouaise, a convent of regular canons near Bapaume, in Hainault, whence the head was translated to the church of St Amatus in Douay. But the latter seems to be the body of St Prima, whom Walter, who conveyed this treasure from Ostia into the Low Countries in 1162, imagined to be the same person with St Monica, though her body remained long after at Ostia.

St Monica, by her earnestness to gain her son to God, is the model of good mothers. She was persuaded that he did not live—nay, that his state was infinitely more miserable than if he had had no existence—so long as he lived not to him who made him, and who was his only happiness and his last end, as she proved to him with admirable penetration, from the principles of sound philosophy, in a conference with him and his friends soon after his conversion; of which, to the honour of her memory, he has preserved us a part in one of his works. Her perseverance in tears and prayers for his conversion could not fail of success, being supported by fervour, perfect purity of intention, and sanctity of life, and accompanied with all prudent measures which it was in her power to take for bringing him to his duty. In vain some mothers flatter themselves that by their long devotions they satisfy this difficult obligation; they are bound also to watch continually over their children; to give and procure them constant instructions; set before them good examples; and to use, when necessary, reprimands and correction, which must be tempered with mildness and affection, be seasonably employed at the times when likely to take best effect, and must always be free from the least motion or appearance of passion. This condition can only be observed by those who have obtained an entire mastery over themselves.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 4 :*

ST GODARD, Bishop, who reformed many monasteries and ever made his first object the relief of the spiritual and temporal needs of the poor : ST MONICA, widow : BLESSED JOHN HOUGHTON, ROBERT LAWRENCE, AUGUSTINE WEBSTER, Carthusians, martyrs in England. In the Dioceses of England ST JOHN FISHER and ST THOMAS MORE and their companion-martyrs are honoured on this date, as is also BLESSED RICHARD REYNOLDS, a friend of Cardinal Pole and a friar at Syon on the Thames. They refused to acknowledge Henry VIII as head of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> Martin V, Sermo ad Fratres Augustinienses de Translatione corporis S. Monicae Ostiæ Romam, printed at Rome in 1586; also in an express bull, published with the usual solemnities in 1430, &c. See Berti de St Monica, c. 7, 8, 9, 10.



MAY 5

## ST PIUS V, POPE, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1572)

[The two original most authentic lives of St Pius V are that wrote by Jerom Catena, secretary to the Cardinal of Alexandria, and consuler to several congregations in Rome, in Italian, highly approved by Sextus V; the other in Latin, by Ant. Gabutio, superior of the regular clerks of St Paul, much commended by Clement VIII. The titles of these two works are: Hieron. Catena Vita del gloriosissimo Papa Pio V; and Raccolta di Littere di Papa Pio V Gabutii de Vita Pii V libr. vi. Bzovius, in his annals on Pius V, adds to this latter several particulars. See his Pius V; also Archangelo Caraccio, Brevis Narratio Gestorum Pii V, Minorelli, Ord. Prædic. Vita St Pie V, Romæ, 1712; Apostolicarum Pii Quinti Epistolarum libri v. operâ Fr Gaubau. Ant. 1649; Paul. Alex. Maffei, Vita di Pio V; Fenillet, Vie du Pape Pie V; Galesini Translatio Corporis Pii V a Sixto V celebrata; Agatio di Somma, whose Italian life of this saint was translated into French by Dom. Felibien in 1672; Tournon, b. xxviii. t. iv. p. 306; and the remarks of Henschenius, ad 5 Maij, t. i. p. 617.]

MICHAEL GHISLERI, known afterwards by the name of Pius V, was born at Bosco, a little town in the diocese of Tortona, on the 27th of January 1504. He was descended of a noble Bolognese family, but considerably reduced in its splendour and fortunes. In his tender years the most perfect maxims of piety were instilled into him, and he never swerved in the least from those principles during the whole course of his life. He studied grammar under the care of the Dominican friars at Voghera; and, giving himself up entirely to the most fervent exercises of religion, took the habit of that Order when he was only fifteen years of age. He was sensible that faint and languishing endeavours never deserve to find the inestimable treasure of true virtue, which they undervalue; they are sure to lose ground and at length to yield under the repeated assaults of the enemy; whereas fervour breaks down all obstacles in the pursuit of perfection as so many shadows, and courageously marches on, reckoning all labours the sweetest pleasures, and esteeming as nothing whatever leads not to this great end. It was the young novice's holy ambition to surpass all others in humility, modesty, and the exercises of mortification, obedience, and devotion. In everything he did he set no bounds to the ardour of his desires to please God, and accomplish his holy will in the most perfect manner. Thus all his actions were perfect sacrifices of his heart, and the meanest were enhanced by the fervour of his intention. To his studies he joined assiduous prayer, watching, fasting, and the exercises of penance and charity. After the uninterrupted fatigue of the day, it was his sweet refreshment to pour forth his soul in tears and devout prayer or meditation for several hours before the altar or in his cell. Having prepared himself by a long and fervent retreat, he was ordained priest at Genoa in 1528. He taught philosophy and divinity sixteen years, and was long employed in instructing the novices and in forming them to piety, and in governing different houses of his Order; in all which offices he laboured effectually to revive the spirit of its holy founder. He never accepted of any priory but by compulsion and with tears. No one would he ever allow to absent

himself from the choir, or to go out of the convent without some urgent necessity. Constant devotion and study he called the double breast from which religious persons draw a spiritual nourishment, which maintains in them the love of God and contempt of the world. Though he went often to Milan to hear the confession of the Marquis of Guast, governor of the Milanese, he could never be persuaded to buy a cloak to defend him from the rain, saying, "Poor followers of the gospel ought to be content with one tunic." His journey he performed on foot, in recollection and strict silence, unless he opened his mouth to speak to his companion something on God. Pope Paul IV, in 1556, promoted him to the united bishoprics of Nepi and Sutri, in the ecclesiastical state, notwithstanding the tears he shed in endeavouring most earnestly to decline that dignity. Under his care these dioceses assumed a new face. In 1557 he was created cardinal by the same pope, under the title of St Mary upon the Minerva, though generally known by that of the Alexandrian cardinal, from Alexandria, a city in Lombardy, a few miles distant from the place of his birth. His dignities served to render his humility and other virtues more conspicuous, but produced no alteration in his furniture, table, fasts, or devotions. He was most scrupulously cautious in the choice of his few necessary domestics, admitting none but persons of most exemplary piety, and he treated them as his children rather than as his servants. Pope Paul IV dying in 1559, he was succeeded by Pius IV, of the family of Medicis, who translated our good cardinal to the bishopric of Mondovi, in Piedmont, a church reduced by the wars to a deplorable and calamitous condition. The saint hastened to his new flock, and by his zealous exhortations and other endeavours re-established peace and union, reformed abuses, and restored the splendour of that church. But an order of his holiness recalled him to Rome for the dispatch of certain public affairs of the church. When Pius IV proposed to the sacred college the promotion of Prince Ferdinand of Medicis, only thirteen years old, to the dignity of cardinal, our saint opposed the motion with such vigour that he made himself admired by the whole consistory for his zeal and prudence. The Emperor Maximilian II wrote to Pope Pius IV to desire that priests might be allowed to marry, as a means that might facilitate the return of the modern sectaries to the communion of the church. The whole sacred college saw the inconveniences of such an abolition of the most holy and ancient canons; but none spoke more vigorously against it than our saint. Though charity will allow all condescension that is possible, here it seemed very unseasonable, on many accounts, to abandon so sacred a spiritual law; and this in favour of men who had shown no disposition towards a reconciliation with the Catholic Church except she would give up many other points, not only of discipline, but also of her faith and doctrine.

Pope Pius IV, after a tedious illness, expired in the arms of St Charles Borromeus on the 9th of December 1565, having filled the chair almost six years. St Charles, when he saw that the pious Cardinal Sirlet, who was first proposed, could not be chosen, united the suffrages of the conclave in favour of our saint, testifying an entire confidence in his virtue. All others applauded the choice except the pope elect, who, having in vain opposed it by tears and entreaties, at length, for fear of resisting the call of God, gave his consent on the 7th of January 1566, and took the name of Pius. The largesses usually bestowed by the popes at their coronation on the people of Rome he converted into alms, to avoid the disorders of intemperance, &c., to which they are liable. He accordingly directed the sums usually expended on such occasions to be distributed among the poor in the hospitals and elsewhere. He in like manner sent to the poorer convents in the city the thousand crowns usually employed in an entertainment for the cardinals, ambassadors, and lords who assisted at the ceremony. His first care was to regulate his family in such a manner that it might be a model of virtue, and he induced the cardinals to do the like in their respective houses. He forbade the public exhibition of the sights of wild beasts, as savouring too much of inhumanity, and published very severe regulations against excesses in taverns, and against detraction committed in public assemblies, and re-established a strict observance and execution of the laws. By rigorous edicts, he banished numbers of lewd women under pain of corporeal punishment, if found afterwards within the city; others he confined to an obscure part of Rome, under the same penalty if they were seen elsewhere. He said mass every day (and usually with tears), unless hindered by sickness; he made daily two meditations on his knees before a crucifix, and called prayer the comfort and support of a pastor amidst the hurry of affairs. His tenderness for the poor and his charities are not to be expressed; but nothing appeared more admirable in him than his sincere and profound humility. An English Protestant gentleman was converted by seeing the condescension and affection with which he kissed the ulcers of the feet of a certain poor man. His rigorous fasts and abstemiousness he would scarce ever mitigate, even on account of sickness. He published the catechism, and the decrees of the Council of Trent, which he laboured strenuously to carry into immediate execution; and made many other useful regulations, extending his solicitude to every part of Christendom, particularly the eastern missions. He generously assisted the knights of Malta, when they were besieged by the most formidable armies of the Turks, and by his liberalities enabled them to repair their breaches after their victories, and to build the new impregnable city of Valette in 1566. The rebellion raised in France under Charles IX obliged him to exert his vigilance in protecting the city and territory of Avignon against the stratagems of Coligny. He purged the ecclesiastical

state of assassins and robbers, but rejected the perfidious proposal of one who offered to invite the chief captain of the robbers to dinner and then to deliver him up. His severity, which was necessary for the public tranquillity, did not make him forget that mercy, wherever it can be allowed to take place, is to be the favourite inclination of a disciple of Christ. A certain Spaniard had composed a bitter and seditious pasquinade, filled with notorious slanders against his holiness, for which the magistrate had confiscated his estate and condemned him to death; but the pope granted him a free pardon, with this mild request that when he should see him fall into any fault he would admonish him of it. By a bull, dated the 1st of October 1567, he condemned several erroneous propositions ascribed to Michael Baius of Lovain, some of which that doctor denied to have been advanced by him, others he with great humility retracted. To recompense the zeal of Cosmus de Medicis, Duke of Florence, he granted him by a bull the title of Grand Duke, and crowned him as such at Rome in 1569, though the emperor refused for some time to acknowledge that new title. By a great number of wise regulations he endeavoured to extirpate various scandals and abuses; in a brief, by which he strongly enforces the canons relating to the respect due to holy places, amongst other things he forbids any either to give or ask an alms in churches, but only at the doors; which is commanded by several councils to prevent an occasion of distractions and an abuse contrary to the silence and respect due to the house of prayer. Certain privileges granted to particular confraternities seem to have given occasion in some places to too great a neglect of these wholesome and necessary canons.

Notwithstanding his attention to the public affairs, the good pope did not forget that the exercises of an interior life are the means by which our souls must maintain and improve the spirit of holy charity, and by it sanctify our exterior actions. Prayer and holy meditation were his delight; for he well knew that the fire of charity will soon be extinguished in the heart unless it be continually nourished by new fuel. St Pius joined to prayer assiduous mortification and large alms. He often visited the hospitals, washed the feet of the poor, kissed their ulcers, comforted them in their sufferings, and disposed them for a Christian death. He gave twenty thousand crowns of gold to the hospital of the Holy Ghost, and great and frequent charities to other hospitals; he founded a distribution of dowries for the marriage of poor women, and made many most useful pious foundations to perpetuate the honour of God and the salvation of souls, particularly in the instruction of youth in the Christian doctrine, which he earnestly recommended to all pastors by an express bull in 1571. In the time of a great famine in Rome he imported corn at his own expense from Sicily and France to the value of above one hundred thousand gold crowns; a considerable part of which he distributed among the poor,

gratis, and sold the rest to the public much under prime cost. Frugal in all things as regarded himself, he was enabled by his good economy to make many useful foundations for promoting virtue and religion, and to relieve the distressed by incredible general alms-deeds and public benefactions, exclusively of the large daily demands which particular charities made upon him. He was a great encourager of learning and learned men; and to him the schools are indebted for the most accurate edition of the works of St Thomas Aquinas, which appeared in 1570. He wrote to Queen Mary Stuart, in 1570, to comfort her during her long imprisonment suffered for religion.

Selimus II, Emperor of the Turks, pursuing the ambitious and boundless designs of his father Solyman, proposed nothing less to himself than to overrun all Christendom with his arms, and to add all the western kingdoms to his empire. Alarmed at the danger which threatened all Christendom, St Pius entered into a league with Philip II, King of Spain, and the Venetians in order to check the progress of the Mahometans; the other Christian princes excusing themselves from acceding to it on account of domestic broils. This alliance was ratified in May 1571; and to avoid occasions of dissension among the princes that were engaged, the pope was declared chief of the league and expedition, who appointed Mark Antony Colonna general of his galleys and Don John of Austria generalissimo of all the forces. The army consisted of twenty thousand good soldiers, besides seamen; and the fleet of one hundred and one great galleys, some tall ships, and a considerable number of galliots and small vessels. The pope, together with his apostolic benediction, sent to the general a prediction of certain victory, with an order to disband all soldiers who seemed to go only for the sake of plunder, and all scandalous and riotous persons, whose crimes might draw down the divine indignation upon their arms.

The Christians sailed directly from Corfu, and found the Turkish fleet at anchor in the harbour of Lepanto. As soon as the Turks saw the Christian fleet so near they reinforced their troops from the land, and sailed out in order of battle. Don John kept the centre, and had for seconds Colonna and the Venetian general, Venieri; Andrew Doria commanded the right wing and Austin Barbarigo the left. Peter Justiniani, who commanded the galleys of Malta, and Paul Jourdain were posted at the extremities of the line. The Marquess of Sainte Croix had a body of reserve of sixty vessels ready to sustain or relieve any part in danger of being overpowered. John of Cordova, with a squadron of eight vessels, scoured before, to spy and give intelligence; and six Venetian galleasses formed an avant-guard to the fleet. A little after sunrise the Turkish fleet, consisting of three hundred and thirty sail of all sorts, appeared in sight, almost in the same order of battle, only, according to their custom,

in form of a crescent. They had no squadron of reserve, and therefore their line being much wider, they far outfronted the Christians, which is a great advantage in battle. Hali was in the centre, facing Don John of Austria; Petauch was his second; Louchali and Siroch commanded the two wings against Doria and Barbarigo. Don John gave the signal of battle by hanging out the banner sent him from the pope, on which the image of Christ crucified was embroidered. The Christian generals harangued their soldiers in few words, then made a sign for prayers; at which the soldiers fell on their knees before a crucifix, and continued in that posture in fervent prayer till the fleets drew near to each other, when at a second signal the battle began. The Turks bore down with great rapidity on the Christians, being assisted by a brisk gale of wind which promised them the greatest advantage possible, especially as they were superior in numbers and in the extent of their front. But the wind, which before was very strong, fell just as the fight began, was succeeded by a calm, and this soon after by a high wind entirely favourable to the Christians, which carried the smoke and fire of their artillery upon the enemy, almost blinded them, and at length quite bore them down. The battle was most obstinate and bloody, and the victory the most complete that ever was gained over the Ottoman empire. After three hours' fight with equal advantage, the left wing, commanded by Barbarigo, got the better and sunk the galley which Siroch was in, who had fought to admiration. His loss so dispirited his squadron that, being vigorously pressed by the Venetians it gave way and made towards the coast. Don John, seeing this advantage of his right wing, was animated with new courage, doubled his fire, and killed Hali, the Turkish general, boarded his galley, pulled down his flag, and cried, Victory; after which it was no longer a fight but a perfect slaughter in the centre, the Turks suffering themselves to be killed without making any resistance. Louchali, indeed, by his numbers and wider front, kept Doria and the right wing at a distance till, the Marquess of Sainte Croix coming up to join him, the Turk made all the sail he could and escaped by flight with thirty galleys, all the rest being either taken or sunk.<sup>1</sup> This battle was fought on the 7th of October 1571, and continued from about six in the morning till evening, when the approaching darkness and the roughness of the sea obliged the Christians to betake themselves to the next havens. The Turks, with their haughty emperor, were seized with the utmost consternation at the news of their dreadful overthrow; and the city of Constantinople was as much alarmed as if the enemy had been at the gates; many of the inhabitants carried their treasures to the Christians to keep for them, as if the town had been already in their hands. The infidels, who, elated by their rapid conquests in the East, had already

<sup>1</sup> See Gratianni's History of Cyprus.

swallowed up, in their imagination, Italy and all the rest of Christendom, were taught by this defeat that the tide of their victories was stemmed. God, who has set bounds to the raging billows of the sea and who weighs in his hand the globe of the universe as a grain of sand, fixes limits to states and empires, and governs their revolutions. By abandoning many flourishing nations to the infidels, he has given a terrible instance of his justice, by which he admonishes others whom he has hitherto spared, though perhaps more guilty, to fear his anger, and by sincere repentance to sue for mercy whilst it is yet offered to them. It is owing to this clemency towards the remaining part of Christendom that he bridled the fury of these most fierce and barbarous infidels in the very height of their pride and prosperity. From that time the Turks have gradually weakened themselves by their own domestic policy, and have at present reason to dread the arms of those Christian powers to whom their very name was formerly a terror. In the battle at Lepanto the infidels lost thirty thousand men, with their general, Hali, and above two hundred ships and galleys, besides ninety that were stranded, burnt, or sunk. There were taken one hundred and sixteen pieces of great cannon, two hundred and fifty-six smaller, and five thousand prisoners, with a great number of officers of rank, among whom were two sons of Hali, nephews to the grand signior. The booty was exceeding great, for the Turkish fleet was laden with the plunder of many merchantmen and of several islands; fifteen thousand slaves that were found chained on board their galleys were set at liberty.

The holy pope, from the beginning of the expedition, had ordered public prayers and fasts, and had not ceased to solicit heaven, with uplifted hands, like Moses on the mountain, besides afflicting his body by watching and fasting. At the hour of the battle, the procession of the Rosary in the church at the Minerva was pouring forth solemn prayers for the victory. The pope was then conversing with some cardinals on business; but, on a sudden, left them abruptly, opened the window, stood some time with his eyes fixed on the heavens, and then shutting the casement, said, "It is not now a time to talk any more upon business; but to give thanks to God for the victory he has granted to the arms of the Christians." This fact was carefully attested, and authentically recorded both at that time and again in the process of the saint's canonization.<sup>1</sup> In consequence of this miraculous victory, the pope ordered the festival of the Rosary to be kept on the first Sunday of October in perpetual thanksgiving to God, and in the litany of our Lady inserted those words, "succour of Christians." He caused a triumph to be decreed Don John, which was graced with many illustrious prisoners; and he bestowed honours and gratifications on other generals and officers. The year following he

<sup>1</sup> See Card. Lambertini, afterwards Benedict XIV, *Beatif. and Canoniz. Sanctor.* t. i. p. 524.

was preparing to pursue the advantage gained by this great victory when he died of the stone on the 1st of May 1572, being sixty-eight years, three months, and fifteen days old, having governed the church six years and almost four months. He had suffered from January the sharpest pains with heroic patience. He was beatified by Clement X in 1672 and canonized by Clement XI in 1712. His precious remains lie in the church of St Mary Major. Many miracles are recorded by Gabutius. Henschenius has added a relation of many others approved by the auditors of the Rota under Urban VIII in 1629.<sup>1</sup>

The greatest danger in a public elevated station is, as St Bernard pathetically put his disciple, whom he saw raised to the popedom, in mind of, lest in the hurry of external concerns we should forget to give sufficient attention to those of our own souls, and lose ourselves in the wilderness or tumult of distracting thoughts and employments. But those who have their whole time at their own disposal, yet have their eyes always abroad, and live, as it were, without themselves, are truly foolish. Everyone's first and principal business is included within himself, in his own heart. It is so deep that we shall always find in it exercise enough, and shall never be able to sound it; only He, who tries the thoughts and reins, can thoroughly know it. What have we to do to concern ourselves so much with the wars of states and the quarrels of private persons? But it is infinitely both our duty and our interest to take cognizance of the contests between the flesh and the spirit within our own breasts; to appease this intestine war by teaching the flesh to be in subjection, placing reason on its throne, and making God reign sovereignly in our hearts. It is not so slight a task as men generally seem to imagine to keep our domestic kingdom in good order, and to govern wisely and holily those numerous people which are contained in this little state, that is to say, that multitude of affections, thoughts, opinions, and passions which easily raise tumults in our hearts. Those who are charged with the care of others are obliged to reserve to themselves leisure for pious meditation, prayer, and self-examination, and diligently to watch over their own souls. "He who is bad to himself, to whom will he be good?"<sup>2</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 5 :*

ST ANGELUS, Carmelite friar; born a Jew, he became an anchorite of austere life on the banks of the Jordan; martyred in Sicily by the connivance of a rich man whose scandalous life he had reprov'd. ST AVERTIN, a holy deacon who attended St Thomas of Canterbury in his exile and through all his troubles. After that prelate's martyrdom, he devoted his life to the service of the poor: ST HILARY, Archbishop of Arles, first gained for God by the efforts of his kinsman, St Honoratus: ST MAURONT, Abbot, born in 634 and baptized by St Riquier: and St Pius V, Pope.

<sup>1</sup> Bolland. t. i. Maij. pp. 714, 719.

<sup>2</sup> Eccl. xiv. 5.



MAY 6

## ST JOHN BEFORE THE LATIN GATE

(A.D. 95)

[From St Jerom in Jovin. t. i. p. 14; Tertullian, Præscr. c. 36; Tillem. t. i. p. 338; and L'Istoria della Chiesa di S. Giovanni avanti Porta Latina, Scritta da Gio. Mario Crescimbeni, Roma, 1716, 4to.]

WHEN the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, strangers as yet to the mystery of the cross and the nature of Christ's kingdom had, by their mother Salome,<sup>1</sup> besought our Lord to allot them the two first places in his kingdom (implied by sitting at his right and left hand), he asked them whether they were disposed to drink of his cup, or, in other words, to suffer with him, in which case they should not fail to be considered in proportion to their pains and fidelity. The two disciples answered boldly in the affirmative, assuring their divine Master that they were ready to undergo anything for his sake. Our Lord thereupon told them that their sincerity should be brought to the trial, and that they both should be partakers of his cup of sufferings, and undergo bitter things for the honour and confirmation of the Christian religion. This was literally fulfilled in St James on his being put to death for the faith by Herod; and this day's festival records in part the manner in which it was verified in St John. It may be said, without any violence to the sense of the words, that this favourite disciple, who so tenderly loved his Master, and was so tenderly beloved by him, drank of his chalice, and experienced a large share of its bitterness, when he assisted at his crucifixion; feeling then in his soul, by grief and compassion, whatever he saw him suffer on the cross. This was further fulfilled after the descent of the Holy Ghost, when he underwent the like imprisonment, scourging, &c., with the other apostles, as is recorded in the fifth chapter of the Acts. But our Saviour's prediction was to be accomplished in a more particular manner, and still more conformable to the letter, and which should entitle him to the merit and crown of martyrdom; the instrument whereof was Domitian, the last of the twelve Cæsars.

He was a tyrant, detestable to all men on account of his cruelty, and the author of the second general persecution of the church. He reigned fifteen years, that is, from the year of Christ 81 to 96. Tacitus says that in cruelty he surpassed Nero, who often shunned the sight of barbarous executions, whereas Domitian was known to take delight in beholding them. He deluged Rome with the blood of its illustrious citizens, and out of a hatred to virtue banished the philosophers; on which occasion Epictetus (whose *Enchiridion* is the most perfect abstract of the justest sentiments of moral virtue ever published by a heathen) and Dio

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xx. 21; Mark x. 35.

Chrysostomus, with others, were expelled the city. As for the Christians, not only the sanctity of their doctrine and manners was the strongest reproach of the crimes of the tyrant, but the general hatred of the heathens against them, excited him to glut his insatiable cruelty with their innocent blood. St John, who was the only surviving apostle, and who at that time governed all the churches of Asia with the highest reputation, which his dignity, extraordinary virtue, and miracles had acquired, was apprehended at Ephesus and sent prisoner to Rome in the year 95. The emperor did not relent at the sight of a man of his most venerable old age and countenance, which alone might suffice to command respect, but condemned him to a most barbarous death by ordering him to be cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. The holy apostle was probably first scourged, according to the Roman custom with regard to criminals before execution who could not plead the privilege of being Roman citizens. It is at least certain from Tertullian, St Jerom, and Eusebius that, by the order of the tyrant, he was thrown into a vessel of boiling oil. The martyr doubtless heard, with great joy, this barbarous sentence, exulting at the thought of speedily rejoining his Redeemer, and desiring to pay love for love in the best manner he was able, and to die for Him who had laid down his most precious life to save sinners from hell. The most cruel torments seemed to him light and most agreeable, because they would, he hoped, unite him for ever to his divine Master and Saviour; but God accepted his will and crowned his desire; he conferred on him the honour and merit of martyrdom, but suspended the operation of the fire, as he had formerly preserved the three children from hurt in the Babylonian furnace. The seething oil was changed in his regard into a refreshing bath, and the saint came out more fresh and lively than he had entered the cauldron. Domitian, with most of the heathens, entertained a great idea of the power of magic, in which he had been confirmed by the reports concerning the prodigies pretended to be wrought by the famous magician, Apollonius of Tyana, whom he had sent for to Rome. He therefore saw this miracle without drawing from it the least advantage, but, like another Pharaoh, remained hardened in his iniquity. However, he contented himself after this with banishing the holy apostle into the little island of Patmos, one of the Sporades, in the Archipelago or Ægean Sea. Domitian being assassinated the year following, his statues were everywhere pulled down, his name erased from all public buildings, and his decrees declared void by the senate. Upon which St John returned to Ephesus in the reign of Nerva, who by mildness, during his short reign of one year and four months, laboured to restore the faded lustre of the Roman empire.

This glorious triumph of St John happened without the gate of Rome called Latina, because it led to Latium. A church was consecrated in the same place in memory of this miracle, under the first Christian emperors,

which has always borne this title. It is said to have been a Pagan temple of Diana before it was converted to the worship of the true God. It was rebuilt by Pope Adrian I in 772. This festival has been kept in many places a holiday. In the twelfth century, and probably long before, till the change of religion, it was observed in England a holiday of the second rank, in which all servile work was forbid except agriculture. Our pious Saxon ancestors had a singular devotion to St Peter and St John the Evangelist.

Our divine Saviour, as a mark of his special favour, and to put their love to the test, asked his two disciples, James and John, whether they could drink of the cup of which he was to drink. His sufferings he called his cup, first, because out of the excess of his love for man he was pressed with a burning desire to suffer and die for his redemption, as with a vehement thirst, which nothing but the ignominies and cruel torments of his cross could satiate.<sup>1</sup> O ardent desire of Jesus to suffer for us! O love of his cross! Secondly, because among the Jews a portion which fell to a person's lot was called his cup, Jesus, by this expression, gives us to understand that his cross and sufferings were allotted him by his eternal Father as his portion, and that from the first moment of his Incarnation he accepted it cheerfully from his hands, with an entire submission to his will, offering himself as a victim perfectly to accomplish it. He presents his cup to his servants to drink, because there is nothing which produces in them so perfect a conformity with himself, or improves more wonderfully all heroic virtues in their souls, or obtains more abundantly for them the greatest graces, provided we bear our cross with him, embrace it affectionately for his love, and offer our sufferings to him, uniting them with his. O precious cross! you are the high royal road to heaven, sanctified and made divine by our sovereign Head, who opened it and showed the way in which all his elect follow him. St John suffered above the other saints a martyrdom of love, being a martyr and more than a martyr at the foot of his divine Master, with the true lovers of Jesus, Magdalen and the Blessed Virgin mother. All his sufferings were by love and compassion imprinted in his soul, and thus shared by him. O singular happiness of St John, to have stood under the cross of Christ, so near his divine person, when the other disciples had all forsaken him! O extraordinary privilege, to have suffered martyrdom in the person of Jesus and been eye-witness of all he did or endured, and of all that happened to him in that great sacrifice and mystery!<sup>2</sup> Here he drank of his cup; this was truly a martyrdom, and our Saviour exempted all those who had assisted at the martyrdom of his cross from suffering death by the hands of persecutors. St John, nevertheless, received also the crown

<sup>1</sup> Luke xii.<sup>2</sup> Joan x. 26.

of this second martyrdom, to which the sacrifice of his will was not wanting, but only the execution.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 6 :*

St EADBERT, Bishop of Lindisfarne, who, as St Bede tells us, excelled in the knowledge of Holy Scripture and in the observance of the Divine precepts ; he tells also of the miracles worked at his tomb and that of St Cuthbert, in whose grave he was laid : ST JOHN BEFORE THE LATIN GATE (commemorating the martyrdom of the Beloved Disciple) : and ST JOHN DAMASCEN, Father of the Church, famous for humility as well as for his profound learning.

MAY 7

## ST STANISLAS, MARTYR, BISHOP OF CRACOW

(A.D. 1079)

[From his life, elegantly written by Longinus Dugloss. Also from Chromerus, Krantzius, b. iii. c. 12, 13, 14, &c. See Papebroke, t. ii. Maij. p. 198.]

STANISLAS SEZEPANOWSKI was born on the 26th of July 1030 at Sezepanow, in the diocese of Cracow. His parents, both of the most illustrious families of Poland, had passed thirty years together without issue when this son was given them by heaven, after they had lost all hopes of children. They received him with thanksgiving to God, and devoted him from his birth to the divine service. The example of their extraordinary piety, charity to the poor, and constant practice of mortification made insensible impressions upon the tender heart of their son, which were strengthened by their assiduous instructions. Young Stanislas from his very infancy showed an unusual affection for prayer, seriousness, and mortification, being very temperate in his meals, often secretly lying on the ground and inuring himself to suffer cold and other inconveniences; in which acts of self-denial he was privately encouraged by his parents, who were far from giving in to the preposterous fondness of many who, by a false tenderness, too often make themselves the spiritual, and sometimes also the corporeal, murderers of their offspring. Stanislas being sent to school, by his progress in learning surpassed the expectation and even wishes of his friends; yet was always more careful to advance in piety. He had no relish for superfluous amusements; the time allowed for recreation he abridged as much as health would permit, and the money which was given him for his pocket was always secretly employed in relieving the poor. When grown up, he was sent to pursue his studies at Gnesna, the first university in the kingdom, and thence to Paris. His mildness, modesty, simplicity, and candour, joined with his capacity for learning, gained him everywhere as many friends and admirers as he had masters and acquaintance. After seven years spent in the schools of canon law and divinity at Paris, refusing, out of humility, the degree of doctor which was offered him, he returned home; and upon the demise of his parents, disposed of his plentiful fortune in favour of the poor. He received the

holy order of priesthood from the hands of Lampert Zula, Bishop of Cracow, and was by him made canon of his cathedral, and soon after his preacher and vicar-general. His assiduous sermons, animated by the Spirit of God, with which he was replenished and supported by the example and sanctity of his life, produced a wonderful reformation of manners, and inspired many with a contempt of the world to follow Christ. Both clergy and laity had recourse to his advice in all spiritual concerns from every part of the kingdom; and his diocesan, desirous of having him for his successor, made an offer to resign to him his bishopric; but the saint's opposition proved a bar not to be moved. However, upon the death of Lampert, he found himself unable to withstand the united votes of the king, clergy, and people, seconded by an express order they had obtained from the pope, Alexander II, for complying with their choice. Wherefore, not to resist the voice and will of heaven, he obeyed, and was consecrated bishop in 1072. This see, which had been formerly metropolitanical, had at that time lost its archiepiscopal prerogative.

Stanislas, seeing himself vested with the character of a successor of the apostles, studied to be such in his spirit and manners. His house was always crowded with poor, and he kept a list of all the widows and distressed persons. He was indefatigable in his functions, especially preaching, and scarce knew how to set bounds to his mortification and the exercises of prayer. He visited his whole diocese every year, and no irregularity, whether in clergy or laity, could pass unobserved by him. Boleslas II was then King of Poland. This prince sullied the glory of his victories (having had great success against the Russians) by his unbridled lust and debaucheries, and by horrid acts of tyranny and injustice which procured him the surname of the Cruel. Though married, he was not ashamed to offer violence to several ladies of quality, and from private crimes broke at last into the most public and brutish extravagances. Those who approached him durst not make him proper remonstrances, such was the dread of his fury. Stanislas, however, boldly laid before him in private the scandal and enormity of his conduct. The king endeavoured at first to extenuate his guilt, and when pressed closer by the saint made some show of repentance. But whatever impression his remonstrances might make upon his mind it soon wore off, and the king fell into his usual disorders and began to express his aversion against the good bishop and to complain of his boldness; neither were flatterers wanting to inflame his resentment. The prince carried off and kept by violence a very beautiful woman, wife of Miecislus, a gentleman in the palatinate of Sirad, and had by her several children. The Archbishop of Gnesna and others of the episcopal order that had free access to the king's person were hereupon solicited by the nobility to carry their complaints to the king and lay before him the enormity of his crime; but the fear of

offending their sovereign stopped their mouths, and this their silence was construed by the people in no other light than that of a mercenary connivance. Stanislas was the only person that had the courage requisite to discharge this duty. Having accordingly recommended the success of the affair to God, he went to court at the head of several gentlemen and ecclesiastics, and once more conjured the king, upon the most pressing considerations, to put an end to his enormous and scandalous disorders. He concluded his remonstrances with telling him that if he persisted in his crimes he ran the risk of being cut off from the communion of the faithful by the sentence of excommunication. This threw the king into a violent rage, who, regarding the saint's charitable expostulation as an insult not to be borne, gave a free loose to his passion and vowed revenge. He had first recourse to calumnies. The saint having purchased some years before an estate of one Peter, a gentleman of Piotrawin who was since dead, and settled it upon his church, the nephews of the deceased were inveigled to accuse the bishop, contrary to truth, that he had never paid for the premises. The cause was pleaded before the king, and the witnesses of the payment durst not appear, having been privately intimidated by the king's agents. The Polish historians of later ages relate that the saint, after three days spent in fasting and prayer, went, accompanied with his clergy, to the church of Piotrawin, which is in the palatinate of Lublin, and causing the grave to be opened, raised Peter to life and brought him into open court, where he declared before the king and the assembly that the land was bought and paid for by Stanislas; after which, being led back to his grave, he again returned to his former state.

After this trial the king seemed reconciled with the saint; but the succeeding acts of cruelty which he exercised upon his subjects, to whom he became a more inhuman tyrant than he had been even to his conquered enemies at Kijow, in Russia, stirred up again the zeal of the holy pastor; and when he could not be admitted into the king's presence, he zealously applied himself to fastings, tears, and prayers for his conversion. Seeing no remedy applied to the evils he deplored, he made the king a third visit and endeavoured to open his eyes. But the prince, like a mad and desperate patient, who looks upon the physician that comes to cure him as his greatest enemy, threatened the saint with certain death if he continued to disturb him. Stanislas still thought it his duty not to abandon his trust, and left nothing untried to compass his charitable ends; but finding all measures ineffectual, he, after a fourth visit, excommunicated him. And having left orders with the canons of the cathedral to break off the church office in case the king, in defiance of the censure, should attempt to enter the church while the service was performing, he left the city and retired to St Michael's, a small chapel at a little distance from Cracow. Thither the king followed him with his guards, whom he ordered to

massacre him on the spot; but going into the chapel with this intent they were struck with such a respect and dread at the presence of the venerable bishop that they durst not attempt it, telling the king that a great light from heaven had affrighted them and prevented their executing his orders. The like happened to a second and a third troop: upon which the king went in himself to animate them to perpetrate the murder. Yet no one durst strike the man of God till the king himself, calling them base cowards, rushed forward and dispatched him with his own hand. Then his life-guards fell on and cut the martyr's body into pieces, which they scattered about the fields to be devoured by beasts and birds of prey. But eagles are said to have defended them till the canons of his cathedral, three days after, gathered them together and privately buried them before the door of the chapel in which he was martyred. Ten years after, the body was translated into the cathedral in Cracow, in 1088, and honoured with innumerable miracles. The barbarous king forbade all marks of sorrow or mourning for his death. Pope Gregory VII excommunicated the tyrant and all his accomplices in this sacrilegious act, and the unhappy prince, tormented with the rack of his own conscience and seeing himself detested by all his subjects, fled out of Poland into Hungary and there perished miserably, some say by becoming his own executioner. Stanislas was crowned on the 8th of May 1079. He was solemnly canonized by Innocent IV in 1253.

How carefully are we bound to guard our heart, even in our tender youth, that it may be a constant source of innocence and happiness! Who will discover to us all the illusions of our passions!—all the snares they lay for us! We must watch these domestic enemies and observe all their motions. In all our undertakings we must narrowly examine our own hearts, and ask them if some passion does not secretly steal into our souls and seek some by-interest in what we do. We must particularly suspect whatever seems to lean toward our darling or ruling passions. These especially deceive us under a thousand disguises. Those which we mistrust most put on the appearance of those against which we are less upon our guard. It is by this watchfulness to discover and curb their first irregular motions, by habitual self-denial and assiduous prayer, that we shall purify and cultivate our hearts and keep our enemies under due restraint, which is the victory of virtue.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 7 :*

ST BENEDICT II, Pope, who laboured much for the conversion of heretics and for the repairing and adorning of churches : ST JOHN OF BEVERLEY, Bishop : ST STANISLAS, born of an illustrious Polish family after his parents had passed thirty years together without issue; he became Bishop of Cracow and was martyred for his courage in reproving and opposing a tyrant king.

MAY 8

ST PETER, ARCHBISHOP OF TARENDAISE, NOW CALLED  
MONSTIERS IN SAVOY

He was a native of Dauphiné. A strong inclination to learning, assisted by a good genius and a happy memory, carried him very successfully through his studies. At twenty years of age he took the Cistercian habit at Bonnevaux, a monastery that had been lately filled by a colony sent by St Bernard from Clairvaux. They employed a great part of the day in hewing wood and tilling the ground in the forest, in perpetual silence and interior prayer. They ate but once a day and their fare was herbs or roots, mostly turnips of a coarse sort. Four hours in the twenty-four was the usual allowance for sleep; so that, rising at midnight, they continued in the church till it was morning and returned no more to rest; which was the primitive custom of that Order. Peter practised the greatest austerities with fervour and alacrity; he was most exactly obedient, obliging to all, humble and modest. His pious parents, after the birth of four children, lived in perpetual continency and the practice of rigorous abstinence, prayed much, and gave large alms: their house they seemed to turn into a hospital, so great was the number of poor and strangers they constantly entertained, whom they furnished with good beds whilst they themselves often lay on straw. The father and his two other sons at length followed Peter to Bonnevaux, and the mother and daughter embraced the same Order in a neighbouring nunnery. The year after Peter had taken the monastic habit, his example was followed by Amedeus, nearly related to the Emperor Conrad III, and sixteen other persons of worth and distinction.

The monastery of Tamies seemed a house of terrestrial angels; so constantly were its inhabitants occupied in the employment of angels, paying to God an uninterrupted homage of praise, adoration, and love. St Peter, by the help of Amedeus III, Count of Savoy, founded in it a hospital to receive all the poor sick persons of the country and all strangers; and would be himself its servant to attend them. In 1142 the Count of Savoy procured his election to the archbishopric of Tarentaise, and he was compelled by St Bernard and the general chapter of his Order, though much against his own inclinations, to accept of that charge. Indeed, that diocese stood extremely in need of such an apostolic pastor, having been usurped by a powerful ambitious wolf named Idrael, whose deposition left it in the most desolate condition. The parish churches and tithes were sacrilegiously held by laymen; and the clergy, who ought to have stemmed the torrent of iniquity, contributed but too often to promote irregularity by their own wicked example. The sight of these evils drew



tears from the eyes of the saint, with which he night and day implored the divine mercy upon the souls intrusted to his care. He directed all his fasts, his prayers, and labours for the good of his flock; being persuaded that the sanctification of the people committed to his charge was an essential condition for securing his own salvation. He altered nothing in the simplicity of a monastic life, and looked on the episcopal character as a laborious employment rather than a dignity. His clothes were plain and his food coarse; for he ate nothing but brown bread, herbs, and pulse, of which the poor had always their share. He made the constant visitation of his diocese his employ; he everywhere exhorted and instructed his whole charge with unwearied zeal and invincible patience, and besides he provided the several parishes of his diocese with able and virtuous pastors. When he came to his bishopric he found the chapter of his cathedral full of irregularities and the service of God performed in a very careless manner; but he soon made that church a pattern of good order and devotion. He recovered the tithes and other revenues of the church that had been usurped by certain powerful laymen; made many excellent foundations for the education of youth and the relief of the poor; repaired several churches and restored everywhere devotion and the decent service of God. The author of his life, who was the constant companion of his labours and the witness of the greatest part of his actions after he was made bishop, assures us he wrought many miracles in several places, chiefly in curing the sick and multiplying provisions for the poor in times of great distress, so that he was regarded as a new Thaumaturgus. The confusion his humility suffered from the honours he received, joined to his love of solitude, made him resolve to retire from the world; and accordingly, in 1155, after he had borne the weight of the episcopal character thirteen years, having settled his diocese in good order, he disappeared on a sudden and made his way to a retired monastery of Cistercians in Germany, where he was not known. In the meantime, his family and diocese mourned for the loss of their tender father. Strict inquiry was made in all the neighbouring provinces, especially in the monasteries, but in vain, till after some time Divine Providence discovered him by the following accident. A young man, who had been brought up under his care, came to the monastery in which he lay concealed, and upon observing the monks as they were going out of the church to their work, he knew his bishop, and made him known to the whole community. The religious no sooner understood who he was but they all fell at his feet, begged his blessing, and expressed much concern for not having known him before. The saint was inconsolable at being discovered and was meditating a new escape, but he was so carefully watched that it was not in his power; so that he was forced to go back to his diocese, where he was received with the greatest demonstrations of joy. He applied

himself to his functions with greater vigour than ever. The poor were always the object of his peculiar care. He was twice discovered to have given away, with the hazard of his own life, in extreme cold weather in winter, the waistcoat which he had on his back. For three months before the harvest he distributed general alms among all the inhabitants of the mountains, provisions being always very scarce there at that season. He founded hospitals on the Alps for the entertainment of poor travellers; because, before that time, many perished for the want of such a succour. To preserve in his heart the spirit of devotion and penance, he continued to practise, as much as possible, all the austerities and other rules of his Order, only commuting manual labour for the spiritual functions of his charge. By his conversation with the God of peace he imbibed an eminent spirit of that virtue, and learned, by humility and charity, to be truly the man of peace; having also a singular talent for extinguishing the most implacable and inveterate enmities. He often reconciled sovereign princes when they were at variance, and prevented several bloody wars. The emperor, Frederic I, set up Octavian, a schismatical pope under the name of Victor, against Alexander III. St Peter was almost the only subject of the empire who had the courage openly to oppose his unjust attempt, and he boldly defended the cause of justice in presence of the tyrant and in many councils. The emperor, who banished others that spoke in favour of that cause, stood in awe of his sanctity; and Peter, by his mild counsels, frequently softened his fierceness and checked the boisterous sallies of his fury whilst, like a roaring lion, he spread terror on every side. The saint preached in Alsace, Burgundy, Lorraine, and in many parts of Italy; and confounded the obstinate by numberless miraculous cures of the sick, performed by the imposition of his hands and prayer. He was ordered by the pope to go into France and Normandy, to endeavour a reconciliation between the kings of England and France, who had made peace in 1169 but quarrelled again the next year. Though then very old, he preached wherever he went. Louis VII sent certain gentlemen of his court to meet him at a great distance and received him with the greatest marks of honour and respect; but honours and crowds were of all things the most troublesome to the saint. The man of God restored the use of sight to one blind in the presence of the Count of Flanders and many other noblemen who were at that time with the King of France, who being also himself an eye-witness, examined carefully all the circumstances and declared the miracle to be evident and incontestable. The saint went from Paris to Chaumont, on the confines of Normandy, where Henry II, King of England, met him; and when he arrived in sight of the holy man, alighted from his horse and, coming up, fell at his feet. The people stole the cloak or hood of St Peter and were going to cut it in pieces to divide the scraps, being persuaded that they would perform miracles. But the king took

the whole cloak for himself, saying, "I have myself seen miraculous cures performed by his girdle, which I already possess." In his presence the saint restored the use of speech to a girl that was dumb. On Ash-Wednesday in 1171, St Peter being at the Cistercian abbey of Mortemer, in the diocese of Rouen, the King of England came thither with his whole court and received ashes from his hands. The archbishop prevailed on the two kings to put an end to their differences by a treaty of peace, and to procure councils to be assembled in their dominions, in which Alexander's title should be solemnly recognised. The holy man hereupon returned to his church, but was some time after sent again by the pope to the King of England to endeavour to compose the difference between him and his son; but his journey had not the desired effect. He fell sick on his return and died the death of the just, at Bellevaux, a monastery of his Order in the diocese of Besançon, in 1174, being seventy-three years old. He was canonized by Pope Celestine III in 1191. See his life, written nine years after his death by Geoffrey, some time his companion, and afterwards Abbot of Hautecombe, by the order of Pope Lucius III. See also Le Nain, t. ii. p. 83.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 8 :*

THE APPARITION OF ST MICHAEL, one of the three archangels particularly distinguished in Holy Scripture : ST GYBRIAN or GOBRIAN, of Ireland, priest, who died at a great age in the eighth century : ST PETER, Archbishop of Tarentaise : ST ODRIAN, Bishop and titular saint of Waterford : ST VICTOR, an illustrious martyr, beheaded at Milan in 303 : and ST WIRO, a holy Irish bishop in the seventh century to whom Prince Pepin of Herstal often repaired barefooted to confess his sins.

## MAY 9

### ST GREGORY NAZIANZEN, B. C., DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

(A.D. 389)

From his own works, and other monuments of that age. See Gregory of Cæsarea, who writ his life in 940 ; Hermant ; Tillemont, t. ix. ; Ceillier, t. vii. ; also the life of this saint, compiled from his works by Baronius, published by Alberici, in an appendix to the life and letters of that cardinal, in 1759, t. ii.]

ST GREGORY who, from his profound skill in sacred learning, is surnamed the Theologian, was a native of Arianzum, an obscure village in the territory of Nazianzum, a small town in Cappadocia not far from Cæsarea. His parents are both honoured in the calendars of the church: his father on the 1st of January and his mother Nonna on the 5th of August. She drew down the blessing of heaven upon her family by most bountiful and continual alms-deeds, in which she knew one of the greatest advantages of riches to consist; yet, to satisfy the obligation of justice which she owed to her children, she by her prudent economy improved at the same time their patrimony. The greatest part of her time she devoted to holy prayer; and her respect and attention to the least thing which regarded

religion is not to be expressed. His father, whose name also was Gregory, was from his infancy a worshipper of false gods, but of the sect called the Hipsistarii, on account of the profession they made of adoring the Most High God. The prayers and tears of Nonna at length obtained of God the conversion of her husband, whose integrity in the discharge of the chief magistracy of his town and the practice of strict moral virtue prepared him for such a change. His son has left us the most edifying detail of his humility, holy zeal, and other virtues.<sup>1</sup> He had three children, Gorgonia, Gregory, and Cæsarius, who was the youngest. Gregory was the fruit of the most earnest prayers of his mother who, upon his birth, offered him to God for the service of his church. His virtuous parents gave him the strongest impressions of piety in his tender age; and his chief study, from his very infancy, was to know God by the help of pious books, in the reading whereof he was very assiduous.

Having acquired grammar-learning in the schools of his own country, and being formed to piety by domestic examples, he was sent to Cæsarea, in Palestine, where the study of eloquence flourished. He pursued the same studies some time at Alexandria, and there embarked for Athens in November. The vessel was beaten by a furious storm during twenty days, without any hopes either for the ship or passengers; all which time he lay upon the deck, bemoaning the danger of his soul on account of his not having been as yet baptized, imploring the divine mercy with many tears and loud groans, and frequently renewing his promise of devoting himself entirely to God in case he survived the danger. God was pleased to hear his prayer: the tempest ceased and the vessel arrived safe at Rhodes, and soon after at Ægina, an island near Athens. He had passed through Cæsarea of Cappadocia in his road to Palestine; and making some stay there to improve himself under the great masters of that city, had contracted an acquaintance with the great St Basil, which he cultivated at Athens, whither that saint followed him soon after. The intimacy between these two saints became from that time the most perfect model of holy friendship, and nothing can be more tender than the epitaph which St Gregory composed upon his friend. Whilst they pursued their studies together, they shunned the company of those scholars who sought too much after liberty, and conversed only with the diligent and virtuous. They avoided all feasting and vain entertainments; and were acquainted only with two streets, one that led to the church and the other to the schools. Riches they despised and accounted as thorns, employing their allowance in supplying themselves with bare necessities for an abstemious and slender subsistence, and disposing of the remainder in behalf of the poor. Envy had no place in them; sincere love made each of them esteem his companion's honour and advantage as his own; they were to

<sup>1</sup> Naz. Or. 19, Carm. 2.

each other a mutual spur to all good, and by a holy emulation neither of them would be outdone by the other in fasting, prayer, or the exercise of any virtue. Saint Basil left Athens first. The progress which St Gregory made here in eloquence, philosophy, and the sacred studies appears by the high reputation which he acquired, and by the monuments which he has left behind him. But his greatest happiness and praise was, that he always made the love and fear of God his principal affair, to which he referred his studies and all his endeavours. In 355 Julian, afterwards emperor, came to Athens, where he spent some months with St Basil and St Gregory in the study of profane literature and the holy scriptures. St Gregory then prognosticated what a mischief the empire was breeding up in that monster, from the levity of his carriage, the rolling and wandering of his eyes, the fierceness of his looks, the tossings of his head, the shrugging up of his shoulders, his uneven gait, his loud and unseasonable laughter, his rash and incoherent discourse—the indications of an unsettled and arrogant mind.<sup>1</sup> The year following, our saint left Athens for Nazianzum and took Constantinople in his way. Here he found his brother Cæsarius arrived not long before from Alexandria, where he had accomplished himself in all the polite learning of that age and applied himself particularly to physic. The Emperor Constantius honoured him with his favour and made him his chief physician. His generosity appeared in this station by his practice of physic, even among the rich, without the inducement of either fee or reward. He was also a father to the poor, on whom he bestowed the greatest part of his income. Gregory was importuned by many to make his appearance at the bar, or at least to teach rhetoric, as that which would afford him the best means to display his talents and raise his fortune in the world. But he answered that he had totally devoted himself to the service of God.

The first thing he did after his return to Nazianzum was to fulfil his engagement of consecrating himself entirely to God by receiving baptism at the hands of his father. This he did without reserve: "I have," says he,<sup>2</sup> "given all I have to him from whom I received it, and have taken him alone for my whole possession. I have consecrated to him my goods, my glory, my health, my tongue, and talents. All the fruit I have received from these advantages has been the happiness of despising them for Christ's sake." From that moment never was man more dead to ambition, riches, pleasures, or reputation. He entertained no secret affection for the things of this world, but trampled under his feet all its pride and perishable goods; finding no ardour, no relish, no pleasure but in God and in heavenly things. His diet was coarse bread, with salt and water.<sup>3</sup> He lay upon the ground; wore nothing but what was coarse and vile. He worked hard all day, spent a considerable part of the night in singing the praises of God, or in

<sup>1</sup> Or. 4, p. 121.<sup>2</sup> Or. 1, p. 32.<sup>3</sup> Carm. 2, p. 31.

contemplation.<sup>1</sup> With riches he contemned also profane eloquence, on which he had bestowed so much pains, making an entire sacrifice of it to Jesus Christ. His classics and books of profane oratory he abandoned to the worms and moths.<sup>2</sup> He regarded the greatest honours as vain dreams, which only deceive men, and dreaded the precipices down which ambition drags its inconsiderate slaves. Nothing appeared to him comparable to the life which a man leads who is dead to himself and his sensual inclinations; who lives as it were out of the world, and has no other conversation but with God.<sup>3</sup> However, he for some time took upon him the care of his father's household and the management of his affairs. He was afflicted with several sharp fits of sickness, caused by his extreme austerities and continual tears, which often did not suffer him to sleep.<sup>4</sup> He rejoiced in his distempers, because in them he found the best opportunities of mortification and self-denial.<sup>5</sup> The immoderate laughter, which his cheerful disposition had made him subject to in his youth, was afterwards the subject of his tears. He obtained so complete a conquest over the passion of anger as to prevent all indeliberate motions of it, and became totally indifferent in regard to all that before was most dear to him. His generous liberality to the poor made him always as destitute of earthly goods as the poorest, and his estate was common to all who were in necessity, as a port is to all at sea.<sup>6</sup> Never does there seem to have been a greater lover of retirement and silence. He laments the excesses into which talkativeness draws men, and the miserable itch that prevails in most people to become teachers of others.<sup>7</sup>

It was his most earnest desire to disengage himself from the converse of men and the world, that he might more freely enjoy that of heaven. He accordingly, in 358, joined St Basil in the solitude into which he had retreated, situate near the river Iris, in Pontus. Here, watching, fasting, prayer, studying the holy scriptures, singing psalms, and manual labour employed their whole time. As to their exposition of the divine oracles, they were guided in this not by their own lights and particular way of thinking, but, as Rufinus writes,<sup>8</sup> by the interpretation which the ancient fathers and doctors of the church had delivered concerning them. But this solitude Gregory enjoyed only just long enough to be enamoured of its sweetness, being soon recalled back by his father, then above eighty, to assist him in the government of his flock. To draw the greater succour from him he ordained him priest by force and when he least expected it. This was performed in the church on some great festival, and probably on Christmas Day in 361. He knew the sentiments of his son with regard to that charge, and his invincible reluctance on several accounts, which was the reason of his taking this method. The saint accordingly speaks

<sup>1</sup> Carm. 55.<sup>5</sup> Ep. 69.<sup>2</sup> Carm. 1.<sup>6</sup> Carm. 49.<sup>3</sup> Or. 29.<sup>7</sup> Or. 9, 29.<sup>4</sup> Carm. 55.<sup>8</sup> Rufin. Hist. lib. ii. c. 9, p. 254.

of his ordination as a kind of tyranny which he knew not well how to digest; in which sentiments he flew into the deserts of Pontus and sought relief in the company of his dear friend St Basil, by whom he had been lately importuned to return. Many censured this his flight, ascribing it to pride, obstinacy, and the like motives. Gregory likewise, himself, reflecting at leisure on his own conduct and the punishment of the prophet Jonas for disobeying the command of God, came to a resolution to go back to Nazianzum; where, after a ten weeks' absence, he appeared again on Easter Day, and there preached his first sermon on that great festival. This was soon after followed by another, which is extant, under the title of his apology for his flight.

In this discourse St Gregory extols the unanimity of that church in faith and their mutual concord; but towards the end of the reign of Julian, an unfortunate division happened in it, which is mentioned by the saint in his first invective against that apostate prince.<sup>1</sup> The bishop, his father, hoping to gain certain persons to the church by condescension, admitted certain writing which had been drawn up by the secret favourers of Arianism in ambiguous and artful terms. This unwary condescension of the elder Gregory gave offence to the more zealous part of his flock, and especially to the monks, who refused thereupon to communicate with him. Our saint discharged his duty so well in this critical affair that he united the flock with their pastor without the least concession in favour of the error of those by whom his father had been tricked into a subscription against his intention and design, his faith being entirely pure. On the occasion of this joyful reunion our saint pronounced an elegant discourse.<sup>2</sup> Soon after the death of Julian he composed his two invective orations against that apostate. He imitates the severity which the prophets frequently made use of in their censure of wicked kings; but his design was to defend the church against the pagans by unmasking the injustice, impiety, and hypocrisy of its capital persecutor. The saint's younger brother, Cæsarius, had lived in the court of Julian, highly honoured by that emperor for his learning and skill in physic. St Gregory pressed him to forsake the family of an apostate prince, in which he could not live without being betrayed into many temptations and snares.<sup>3</sup> And so it happened; for Julian, after many caresses, assailed him by inveigling speeches, and at length, by a warm disputation in favour of idolatry. Cæsarius answered him that he was a Christian, and such he was resolved always to remain. However, apprehensive of the dangers in which he lived, he soon after chose rather to resign his post than to run the hazard of his faith and a good conscience. He therefore left the court, though the emperor endeavoured earnestly to detain him. After the miserable death of the apostate, he appeared again with distinction in the courts of

<sup>1</sup> Or. 3, p. 53.<sup>2</sup> Or. 12.<sup>3</sup> Ep. 17.

Jovian and Valens, and was made by the latter *Comes rerum privatarum*, or treasurer of the imperial rents, which office was but a step to higher dignities. In the discharge of this employment of Bithynia he happened to be at Nice in the great earthquake, which swallowed up the chief part of that city in 368. The treasurer, with some few others, escaped by being preserved through a wonderful providence in certain hollow parts of the ruins. St Gregory improved this opportunity to urge him again to quit the world and its honours, and to consecrate to God alone a life for which he was indebted to him on so many accounts.<sup>1</sup> Cæsarius, moved by so awakening an accident, listened to his advice and took a resolution to renounce the world; but returning home, fell sick and died in the fervour of his sacrifice, about the beginning of the year 368, leaving his whole estate to the poor.<sup>2</sup> He is named in the Roman Martyrology on the 25th of February. St Gregory, extolling his virtue, says that whilst he enjoyed the honours of the world he looked upon the advantage of being a Christian as the first of his dignities and the most glorious of all his titles, reckoning all the rest dross and dung. He was buried at Nazianzum, and our saint pronounced his funeral panegyric, as he also did that of his holy sister Gorgonia, who died soon after. He extols her humility; her prayer often continued whole nights with tears; her modesty, prudence, patience, resignation, zeal, respect for the ministers of God and for holy places; her liberality to them and great charity to the poor; her penance, extraordinary care of the education of her children, &c. He mentions as miraculous her being cured of a palsy by praying at the foot of the altar, and her recovery after great wounds and bruises which she had received by a fall from her chariot.

In 372 Cappadocia was divided by the emperor into two provinces, and Tyana made the capital of that which was called the second. Anthimus, bishop of that city, pretended hence to an archiepiscopal jurisdiction over the second Cappadocia. St Basil, the Metropolitan of Cappadocia, maintained that the civil division of the province had not infringed his jurisdiction, though he afterwards, for the sake of peace, yielded the second Cappadocia to the see of Tyana. He appointed our saint Bishop of Sasima, a small town in that division. Gregory stood out a long time, but at length submitted, overcome by the authority of his father and the influence of his friend. He accordingly received the episcopal consecration from the hands of St Basil, at Cæsarea, about the middle of the year 372. But he repaired to Nazianzum to wait a favourable opportunity of taking possession of his church of Sasima, which never happened; for Anthimus, who had in his interest the new governor, and was master of all the avenues and roads to that town, would by no means admit him. Basil reproached his

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 16.

<sup>2</sup> His will was comprised in these words: "I bequeath my whole substance to the poor."



friend with sloth; but St Gregory answered him that he was not disposed to fight for a church.<sup>1</sup> He, however, charged himself with the government of that of Nazianzum under his father till his death, which happened the year following. St Gregory pronounced his funeral panegyric in presence of St Basil and of his mother, St Nonna, who died shortly after. Holy solitude had been the constant object of his most earnest desires, and he had only waited the death of his father entirely to bury himself in it. Nevertheless, yielding to the importunities of others and to the necessities of the church of Nazianzum, he consented to continue his care of it till the neighbouring bishops could provide it with a pastor. But seeing this affair protracted, and finding himself afflicted with various distempers, he left that city and withdrew to Seleucia, the metropolis of Isauria, in 375, where he continued five years. The death of St Basil, in 379, was to him a sensible affliction, and he then composed twelve epigrams or epitaphs to his memory; and some years after pronounced his panegyric at Cæsarea, namely, in 381 or 382. The unhappy death of the persecuting emperor Valens, in 378, restored peace to the church. The Catholic pastors sought means to make up the breaches which heresy had made in many places. For this end they held several assemblies and sent zealous and learned men into the provinces in which the tyrant had made the greatest havoc. The church of Constantinople was of all others in the most desolate and abandoned condition, having groaned during forty years under the tyranny of the Arians, and the few Catholics who remained there having been long without a pastor and even without a church wherein to assemble. They, being well acquainted with our saint's merit, importuned him to come to their assistance, and were backed by several bishops, desirous that his learning, eloquence, and piety might restore that church to its splendour. But such were the pleasures he enjoyed in his beloved retirement at Seleucia, and in his thorough disengagement from the world, that for some time these united solicitations made little or no impression on him. They had, however, at length their desired effect. His body bent with age, his head bald, his countenance extenuated with tears and austerities, his poor garb, and his extreme poverty made but a mean appearance at Constantinople; and no wonder that he was at first ill received in that polite and proud city. The Arians pursued him with calumnies, railleries, and insults. The prefects and governors added their persecutions to the fury of the populace, all which concurred to acquire him the glorious title of confessor. He lodged first in the house of certain relations, where the Catholics first assembled to hear him. He soon after converted it into a church and gave it the name of Anastasia, or the Resurrection, because the Catholic faith, which in that city had been hitherto oppressed, here seemed to be raised, as it were, from the dead. Sozomen relates that this

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 32.

name was confirmed to it by a miraculous raising to life of a woman then with child, who was killed by falling from a gallery in it, but returned to life by the prayers of the congregation.<sup>1</sup> Another circumstance afterwards confirmed in this church the same name. During the reign of the Emperor Leo the Thracian, about the year 460, the body of St Anastasia, virgin and martyr, was brought from Sirmich to Constantinople and laid in this place, as is recorded by Theodorus the Reader.<sup>2</sup> But this church is not to be confounded with another of the same name, which was in the hands of the Novatians under Constantius and Julian the Apostate.<sup>3</sup>

In this small church Nazianzen preached, and every day assembled his little flock, which increased daily. The Arians and Apollinarists, joined with other sects, not content to defame and calumniate him, had recourse to violence on his person. They pelted him with stones as he went along the streets, and dragged him before the civil magistrates as a malefactor, charging him with tumult and sedition. But he comforted himself on reflecting that though they were the stronger party he had the better cause; though they possessed the churches, God was with him; if they had the populace on their side, the angels were on his, to guard him. St Jerom coming out of the deserts of Syria to Constantinople became the disciple and scholar of St Gregory, and one of those who studied the holy scripture under him, of which that great doctor glories in his writings. Our holy pastor, being a lover of solitude, seldom went abroad or made any visits, except such as were indispensable; and the time that was not employed in the discharge of his functions he devoted to prayer and meditation, spending a considerable part of the night in those holy exercises. His diet was herbs and a little salt with bread. His cheeks were furrowed with the tears which he shed, and he daily prostrated himself before God to implore his light and mercy upon his people. His profound learning, his faculty of forming the most noble conceptions of things, and the admirable perspicuity, elegance, and propriety with which he explained them, charmed all who heard him. The Catholics flocked to his discourses as men parching with thirst eagerly go to the spring to quench it. Heretics and pagans resorted to them, admiring his erudition and charmed with his eloquence. The fruits of his sermons were every day sensible; his flock became in a short time very numerous, and he purged the people of that poison which had corrupted their hearts for many years. St Gregory heard, with blushing and confusion, the applause and acclamations with which his discourses were received; and his fear of this danger made him speak in public with a certain timidity and reluctance. He scorned to flatter the great ones, and directed his discourses to explain and corroborate the Catholic faith and reform the manners of the people. He taught them that the way to salvation was

<sup>1</sup> Sozom. lib. vii. c. 5.<sup>2</sup> Lib. ii. p. 191.<sup>3</sup> Socr. lib. ii. c. 38.

not to be ever disputing about matters of religion (an abuse that was grown to a great height at that time in Constantinople), but to keep the commandments,<sup>1</sup> to give alms, to exercise hospitality, to visit and serve the sick, to pray, sigh, and weep; to mortify the senses, repress anger, watch over the tongue, and subject the body to the spirit. The envy of the devil and of his instruments could not bear the success of his labours, and by exciting trouble found means to interrupt them. Maximus, a native of Alexandria, a cynic philosopher, but withal a Christian, full of the impudence and pride of that sect, came to Constantinople; and under an hypocritical exterior disguised a heart full of envy, ambition, covetousness, and gluttony. He imposed on several, and for some time on St Gregory himself, who pronounced an eulogium of this man in 379, now extant, under the title of the Eulogium of the Philosopher Hero; but St Jerom assures us that instead of Hero we ought to read Maximus. This wolf in sheep's clothing having gained one of the priests of the city, and some partizans among the laity, procured himself to be ordained Bishop of Constantinople in a clandestine manner, by certain Egyptian bishops who lately arrived on that intent. The irregularity of this proceeding stirred up all the world against the usurper. Pope Damasus writ to testify his affliction on that occasion, and called the election null. The Emperor Theodosius the Great, then at Thessalonica, rejected Maximus with indignation; and coming to Constantinople, proposed to Demophilus, the Arian bishop, either to receive the Nicene faith or to leave the city; and upon his preferring the latter, his majesty, embracing St Gregory, assured him that the Catholics of Constantinople demanded him for their bishop, and that their choice was most agreeable to his own desires. Theodosius, within a few days after his arrival, drove the Arians out of all the churches in the city and put the saint in possession of the Church of St Sophia, upon which all the other churches of the city depended. Here the clamours of the people were so vehement that Gregory might be their bishop that all was in confusion till the saint prevailed upon them to drop that subject and to join in praise and thanksgiving to the ever blessed Trinity for restoring among them the profession of the true faith. The emperor highly commended the modesty of the saint. But a council was necessary to declare the see vacant and the promotion of the Arian Demophilus and of the cynic Maximus void and null. A synod of all the East was then meeting at Constantinople, in which St Meletius, Patriarch of Antioch, presided. He being the great friend and admirer of Nazianzen, the council took his cause into consideration before all others, declared the election of Maximus null, and established St Gregory Bishop of Constantinople, without having any regard to his tears and expostulations. St Meletius dying during the synod, St Gregory presided in the latter sessions. To

<sup>1</sup> Carm. i.

put an end to the schism between Meletius and Paulinus at Antioch, it had been agreed that the survivor should remain in sole possession of that see. This Nazianzen urged; but the oriental bishops were unwilling to own for patriarch one whom they had opposed. They therefore took great offence at this most just and prudent remonstrance, and entered into a conspiracy with his enemies against him. The saint, who had only consented to his election through the importunity of others, was most ready to relinquish his new dignity. This his enemies sought to deprive him of, together with his life, on which they made several attempts. Once, in particular, they hired a ruffian to assassinate him. But the villain, touched with remorse, repaired to the saint with many tears, wringing his hands, beating his breast, and confessing his black attempt, which he should have put in execution had not Providence interposed. The good bishop replied: "May God forgive you; his gracious preservation obliges me freely to pardon you. Your attempt has now made you mine. One only thing I beg of you, that you forsake your heresy and sincerely give yourself to God." Some warm Catholics complained of his lenity and indulgence towards the Arians, especially those who had shown themselves violent persecutors under the former reigns.

In the meantime the bishops of Egypt and those of Macedonia arriving at the council, though all equally in the interest of Paulinus of Antioch, complained that Gregory's election was uncanonical, it being forbidden by the canons to transfer bishops from one see to another. Nazianzen calmly answered that those canons had lost their force by long disuse: which was most notorious in the East. Nor did they in the least regard his case; for he had never taken possession of the see of Sasima, and only governed that of Nazianzum as vicar under his father. However, seeing a great ferment among the prelates and people, he cried out in the assembly, "If my holding the see of Constantinople gives any disturbance, behold I am very willing, like Jonas, to be cast into the sea to appease the storm, though I did not raise it. If all followed my example, the church would enjoy an uninterrupted tranquillity. This dignity I never desired; I took this charge upon me much against my will. If you think fit, I am most ready to depart; and I will return back to my little cottage, that you may remain here quiet, and the church of God enjoy peace. I only desire that the see may be filled by a person that is capable and willing to defend the faith."<sup>1</sup> He thereupon left the assembly, overjoyed that he had broken his bands. The bishops, whom he left in surprise, but too readily accepted his resignation. The saint went from the council to the palace, and falling on his knees before the emperor and kissing his hand, said, "I am come, sir, to ask neither riches nor honours for myself or friends, nor ornaments for the churches, but licence to retire. Your majesty knows

<sup>1</sup> *Carm.* i.

how much against my will I was placed in this chair. I displease even my friends on no other account than because I value nothing but God. I beseech you, and make this my last petition, that among your trophies and triumphs you make this the greatest, that you bring the church to unity and concord." The emperor and those about him were astonished at such a greatness of soul, and he with much difficulty was prevailed on to give his assent. This being obtained, the saint had no more to do than to take his leave of the whole city, which he did in a pathetic discourse, delivered in the metropolitan church before the hundred and fifty fathers of the council and an incredible multitude of the people.<sup>1</sup> He describes the condition in which he had found that church on his first coming to it and that in which he left it, and gives to God his thanks and the honour of the re-establishment of the Catholic faith in that city. He makes a solemn protestation of the disinterestedness of his own conduct during his late administration, not having touched any part of the revenues of the see of Constantinople the whole time. He reproaches the city with the love of shows, luxury, and magnificence, and says he was accused of too great mildness, also of a meanness of spirit, from the lowly appearance he made with respect both to dress and table. He vindicates his behaviour in these regards, saying, "I did not take it to be any part of my duty to vie with consuls, generals, and governors, who know not how to employ their riches otherwise than in pomp and show. Neither did I imagine that the necessary subsistence of the poor was to be applied to the support of luxury, good cheer, a prancing horse, a sumptuous chariot, and a long train of attendants. If I have acted in another manner and have thereby given offence, the fault is already committed and cannot be recalled, but I hope is not unpardonable." He concludes by bidding a moving farewell to his church, to his dear Anastasia, which he calls, in the language of St Paul, his glory and his crown; to the cathedral and all the other parishes of the city, to the holy apostles as honoured in the magnificent church (in which Constantius had placed the relics of St Andrew, St Luke, and St Timothy), to the episcopal throne, to the clergy, to the holy monks and the other pious servants of God, to the emperor and all the court with its jealousies, pomp, and ambition, to the East and West divided in his cause, to the tutelar angels of his church, and to the sacred Trinity honoured in that place. He concludes with these words: "My dear children, preserve the depositum of faith, and remember the stones which have been thrown at me because I planted it in your hearts." The saint was most tenderly affected in abandoning his dear flock—his converts especially which he had gained at his first church of Anastasia, as they had already signalized themselves in his service by suffering persecutions with patience for his sake. They followed him weeping, and entreating

him to abide with them. He was not insensible to their tears; but motives of greater weight obliged him not to regard them on this occasion. St Gregory, seeing himself at liberty, rejoiced in his happiness, as he expressed himself some time after to a friend in these words: "What advantages have not I found in the jealousy of my enemies! They have delivered me from the fire of Sodom by drawing me from the dangers of the episcopal charge."<sup>1</sup> This treatment was the recompense with which men rewarded the labours and merit of a saint whom they ought to have sought in the remotest corners of the earth: but that city was not worthy to possess so great and holy a pastor. He had in that short time brought over the chief part of its inhabitants to the Catholic faith, as appears from his works and from St Ambrose.<sup>2</sup> He had conquered the obstinacy of heretics by meekness and patience, and thought it a sufficient revenge for their former persecutions that he had it in his power to chastise them.<sup>3</sup> The Catholics he induced to show the same moderation towards them, and exhorted them to serve Jesus Christ by taking a Christian revenge of them, the bearing their persecutions with patience and the overcoming evil with good.<sup>4</sup> Besides establishing the purity of faith, he had begun a happy reformation of manners among the people; and much greater fruits were to be expected from his zealous labours. Nectarius, who succeeded him, was a soft man, and by no means equal to such a charge.

Before the election of Nectarius, Gregory left the city and returned to Nazianzum. In that retirement he composed the poem on his own life, particularly dwelling on what he had done at Constantinople to obviate the scandalous slanders which were published against him. He laboured to place a bishop at Nazianzum, but was hindered by the opposition of many of the clergy. Sickness obliged him to withdraw soon after to Arianzum, probably before the end of the year 381. In his solitude he testifies<sup>5</sup> that he regretted the absence of his friends, though he seemed insensible to everything else of this world. To punish himself for superfluous words (though he had never spoken to the disparagement of any neighbour) he, in 382, passed the forty days of Lent in absolute silence. In his desert he never refused spiritual advice to any that resorted to him for it. In his parænetic poem to St Olympias he lays down excellent rules for the conduct of married women. Among other precepts, he says, "In the first place, honour God; then respect your husband as the eye of your life, for he is to direct your conduct and actions. Love only him; make him your joy and your comfort. Take care never to give him any occasion of offence or disgust. Yield to him in his anger; comfort and assist him in his pains and afflictions, speaking to him with sweetness and tenderness, and making him prudent and modest remonstrances at seasonable times. It is not by violence and strength that

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 73.<sup>2</sup> L. de Spir. Sancto.<sup>3</sup> Or. 32.<sup>4</sup> Or. 24.<sup>5</sup> Ep. 73.

the keepers of lions endeavour to tame them when they see them enraged; but they soothe and caress them, stroking them gently, and speaking with a soft voice. Never let his weaknesses be the subject of your reproaches. It can never be just or allowable for you to treat a person in this manner whom you ought to prefer to the whole world." He prays that this holy woman might become the mother of many children, that there might be the more souls to sing the praises of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> He often repeats this important advice, that everyone begin and end every action by offering his heart and whatever he does to God by a short prayer.<sup>2</sup> For we owe to God all that we are or have; and he accepts and rewards the smallest action, not so much with a view to its importance as to the affection of the heart, which in his poverty gives what it has, and is able to give in return for God's benefits and in acknowledgment of his sovereignty.

St Gregory had been obliged to govern the vacant see of Nazianzum after the death of his father, leaving the chief care of that church to Cledonius in his absence. But in 382 he procured Eulalias to be ordained bishop of that city, and spent the remainder of his life in retirement near Arianzum, still continuing to aid that church with his advice, though at that time very old and infirm. In this private abode he had a garden, a fountain, and a shady grove, in which he took much delight. Here, in company with certain solitaries, he lived estranged from pleasures and in the practice of bodily mortification, fasting, watching, and praying much on his knees. "I live," says he, "among rocks and with wild beasts, never seeing any fire or using shoes; having only one single garment."<sup>3</sup> I am the outcast and the scorn of men. I lie on straw, clad in sackcloth: my floor is always moist with the tears I shed."<sup>4</sup> In the decline of life he set himself to write pious poems for the edification of such among the faithful as were fond of music and poetry. He had also a mind to oppose the poems made use of by the Apollinarist heretics to propagate their errors by such as were orthodox, useful, and religious, as the priest Gregory says in his life. He considered this exercise also as a work of penance, compositions in metre being always more difficult than those in prose. He therein recounts the history of his life and sufferings: he publishes his faults, his weaknesses, and his temptations, enlarging much more on these than on his great actions. He complains of the annoyance of his rebellious flesh, notwithstanding his great age, his ill state of health, and his austerities, acknowledging himself wholly indebted to the divine grace which had always preserved in him the treasure of virginity inviolable. God suffered him to feel these temptations that he might not be exposed to the snares of vanity and pride; and that whilst his soul dwelt in heaven he might be put in mind by the rebellion

<sup>1</sup> Quo plures celebrant magni præconia reals. Nor. t. ii. p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Or. i. p. x; Or. 9, pp. 152-154, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Carm. 5 and 60.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. 147.

of the body that he was still on earth in a state of war. His poems are full of cries of ardent love, by which he conjures Jesus Christ to assist him, without whose grace he declares we are only dead carcasses, exhaling the stench of sin, and as incapable of making one step as a bird is of flying without air, or a fish of swimming without water; for he alone makes us see, act, and run.<sup>1</sup> He joined great watchfulness to prayer, especially shunning the conversation and neighbourhood of women,<sup>2</sup> over and above the assiduous maceration of his body. In his letters he gives to others the same advice, of which his own life was a constant example. One instance shall suffice. Sacerdos, a holy priest, was fallen into an unjust persecution through slander. St Gregory writes to him thus in his third letter: "What evil can happen to us after all this? None, certainly, unless we by our own fault lose God and virtue. Let all other things fall out as it shall please God. He is the master of our life, and knows the reason of everything that befalls us. Let us only fear to do anything unworthy our piety. We have fed the poor, we have served our brethren, we have sung the psalms with cheerfulness. If we are no longer permitted to continue this, let us employ our devotion some other way. Grace is not barren, and opens different ways to heaven. Let us live in retirement; let us occupy ourselves in contemplation; let us purify our souls by the light of God. This perhaps will be no less a sacrifice than anything we can do." These were St Gregory's occupation from the time of his last retirement till his happy death in 389, or, according to others, in 391. Tillemont gives him only sixty or sixty-one years of age, but he was certainly considerably older. The Latins honour him on the 9th of May. The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus caused his ashes to be translated from Nazianzum to Constantinople, and to be laid in the Church of the Apostles, which was done with great pomp in 950. They were brought to Rome in the crusades and lie under an altar in the Vatican Church.

This great saint looked upon the smiles and frowns of the world with indifference, because spiritual and heavenly goods wholly engrossed his soul. "Let us never esteem worldly prosperity or adversity as things real or of any moment," said he,<sup>3</sup> "but let us live elsewhere, and raise all our attention to heaven, esteeming sin as the only true evil, and nothing truly good but virtue, which unites us to God."

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 9 :*

ST BRYNOTH, Bishop of Scara in Sweden : ST GREGORY NAZIENZEN : ST HERMAS, a Christian of distinction in Rome whom St Paul salutes (1 Rom. xvi. 14) ; THE VENERABLE THOMAS PICKERING, O.S.B., martyr : ST NICHOLAS, Bishop of Lincöpen in Sweden : and, in Scotland, the TRANSITION OF THE BODY OF ST ANDREW, the Apostle.

<sup>1</sup> Carm. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 196, p. 894.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 189.



MAY 10

ST ISIDORE OF MADRID, LABOURER,  
PATRON OF MADRID

IT is a misfortune which deserves to be lamented with floods of tears that ignorance, obstinacy, and vice should so often taint a country life, the state which of all others is most necessary and important to the world; the most conformable to a human condition and to nature, the state which was sanctified by the example of the primitive holy patriarchs, and which affords the most favourable opportunities for the perfect practice of every virtue and Christian duty. What advantageous helps to piety did the ancient hermits seek in the deserts which the circumstances of a country labourer do not offer? The life of St Isidore is a most sensible proof of this assertion. He was born at Madrid of poor but very devout parents, and was christened Isidore from the name of their patron, St Isidore of Seville. They had not the means to procure him learning or a polite education; but, both by word and example, they infused into his tender soul the utmost horror and dread of all sin, and the most vehement ardour for every virtue, and especially for prayer. Good books are a great help to holy meditation, but not indispensably requisite. St Irenæus mentions whole nations which believed in Christ, and abounded in exemplary lives, without knowing the use of ink or paper. Many illustrious anchorets knew no other alphabet than that of humility and divine charity. The great St Antony himself could not so much as read the Greek or Latin languages; nay, from the words of St Austin, some doubt whether he could read even his own barbarous Egyptian dialect. Yet in the science of the saints what philosopher or orator ever attained to the A B C of that great man? Learning, if it puffs up the mind, or inspires any secret self-sufficiency, is an impediment to the communications of the Holy Ghost, simplicity and sincere humility being the dispositions which invite him into the soul. By these was Isidore prepared to find him an interior instructor and comforter. His earnestness in seeking lessons and instructions of piety made him neglect no opportunity of hearing them; and so much the more tender and the deeper were the impressions which they left in his soul as his desire was the stronger and the more pure. His patience in bearing all injuries and in overcoming the envy of fellow-servants by cordial kindnesses; his readiness to obey his masters, and in indifferent things to comply with the inclinations of others, and humbly to serve everyone, gave him the most complete victory over himself and his passions. Labour he considered as enjoined him by God in punishment of sin, and for a remedy against it; and he performed his work in a spirit of compunction and penance. Many object that their labours and

fatigues leave them little time for the exercises of religion. But Isidore, by directing his attention according to the most holy motives of faith, made his work a most perfect act of religion. He considered it as a duty to God; therefore he applied himself to it with great diligence and care, in imitation of the angels in heaven, who in all things fulfil the will of God with the greatest readiness and alacrity of devotion. The more humbling and the more painful the labour was, the dearer it was to the saint, being a means the more suitable to tame his flesh, and a more noble part of his penance. With the same spirit that the saints subdued their bodies by toils in their deserts, Isidore embraced his task. He, moreover, sanctified it by continual prayer. Whilst his hand held the plough, he in his heart conversed with God, with his angel guardian, and the other blessed spirits; sometimes deploring the sins of the world and his own spiritual miseries, at other times, in the melting words of the royal prophet, raising his desires to the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem. It was chiefly by this perfect spirit of prayer, joined with or rather engrafted upon a most profound humility and spirit of mortification, that St Isidore arrived at so eminent a degree of sanctity as rendered him the admiration of all Spain. In his youth he was retained servant by a gentleman named John de Vargas, of Madrid, to till his land and do his husbandry work. The saint afterwards took a most virtuous woman to wife, named Mary Toribia. Those who call her *De la Cabeza* were deceived by a chapel to which that name is given because her head is kept in it. After the birth of one child, which died young, the parents, by mutual consent, served God in perfect continency.

St Isidore continued always in the service of the same master. On account of his fidelity he could say to him as Jacob did to Laban,<sup>1</sup> that, to guard and improve his stock, he had often watched the nights and had suffered the scorching heats of summer and the cold of winter; and that the stock, which he found small, had been exceedingly increased in his hands. Don John de Vargas, after long experience of the treasure he possessed in this faithful ploughman, treated him as a brother, according to the advice of Ecclesiasticus,<sup>2</sup> "Let a wise servant be dear unto thee as thy own soul." He allowed him the liberty of assisting daily at the public office of the church. On the other side, Isidore was careful, by rising very early, to make his devotions no impediment to his business nor any encroachment upon what he owed to his master. This being a duty of justice, it would have been a false devotion to have pretended to please God by a neglect of such an obligation; much less did the good servant indulge his compassionate charity to the poor by relieving them otherwise than out of his own salary. The saint was sensible that in his fidelity, diligence, and assiduous labour consisted, in great part, the sanctification

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxxi. 40; xxx. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Eccles. vii. 28.

of his soul; and that his duty to his master was his duty to God. He also inspired his wife with the same confidence in God, the same love of the poor, and the same disengagement from the things of this world; he made her the faithful imitatrix of his virtues and a partner in his good works. She died in 1175, and is honoured in Spain among the saints. Her immemorial veneration was approved by Pope Innocent XII in 1697. See Benedict XIV, de Canoniz. lib. ii. c. 24, p. 246.

St Isidore being seized with the sickness of which he died, foretold his last hour, and prepared himself for it with redoubled fervour, and with the most tender devotion, patience, and cheerfulness. The piety with which he received the last sacraments drew tears from all that were present. Repeating inflamed acts of divine love, he expired on the 15th of May 1170, being near sixty years of age. His death was glorified by miracles. After forty years his body was removed out of the churchyard into the church of St Andrew. It has been since placed in the bishop's chapel, and during these five hundred years remains entire and fresh, being honoured by a succession of frequent miracles down to this time. The following, among others, is very well attested. Philip III, in his return from Lisbon, was taken so ill at Casarubios del Monte that his life was despaired of by his physicians. Whereupon the shrine of St Isidore was ordered to be carried in a solemn procession of the clergy, court, and people from Madrid to the chamber of the sick king. The joint prayers of many prevailed. At the same time the shrine was taken out of the church the fever left the king; and upon its being brought into his chamber he was perfectly cured. The year following, the body of the saint was put into a new rich shrine, which cost one thousand six hundred ducats of gold. St Isidore had been beatified a little before by Paul V, in 1619, at the solicitation of the same king. His solemn canonization was performed at the request of King Philip IV on the 12th of March 1622; though the bull was only made public by Benedict XIII. See the life of St Isidore, written by John of Madrid, one hundred and forty years after his death; and Card. Lambertini, de Canoniz. SS. t. iii.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 10 :*

ST ANTONINUS ("Little Anthony"), a famous Dominican of the fifteenth century, Archbishop of Florence; he lodged, and rebuilt the houses of, the distressed during frequent earthquakes. Cosmus de Medicis said the preservation of their Republic was owing to the merits and prayers of this holy archbishop: ST CATULDUS, a learned Irish monk, who became Bishop of Tarentum in Italy: ST COMGALL, Abbot in Ireland: ST GORDIAN, a magistrate sentenced to death under Julian the Apostate, and ST EPIMACHUS, near whose relics his own were laid: and ST ISIDORE, Patron of Madrid.

MAY 11

## ST MAMMERTUS, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF VIENNE

(A.D. 477)

[From a homily of St Avitus, his disciple, on the Institution of the Rogation Days, t. ii.; *Op. Sirmond*, p. 136; and from St Sidonius Apollinaris, lib. vii. Ep. 1, p. 1014, lib. v. Ep. 14. See Ceillier, t. xv. p. 23; Rivet, *Hist. Littér. Fr.* t. ii. p. 480.]

ST MAMMERTUS, Archbishop of Vienne in Dauphiné, in which see he succeeded Simplicius in the fifth age, was a prelate renowned in the Church for his sanctity, learning, and miracles. He instituted in his diocese the fasts and supplications called the Rogations, on the following occasion.<sup>1</sup> Almighty God, to punish the sins of the people, visited them with wars and other public calamities, and awaked them from their spiritual lethargy by the terrors of earthquakes, fires, and ravenous wild beasts, which last were sometimes seen in the very market-places of cities; such was the desolate state to which the country was reduced. These evils the impious ascribed to blind chance; but religious and prudent persons considered them as tokens of the divine anger, which threatened them with entire destruction unless they strove effectually to avert it by sincere repentance. Amidst these scourges, St Mammertus received a token of the divine mercy. A terrible fire happened in the city of Vienne, which baffled the efforts of men; but by the prayers of the good bishop the fire on a sudden went out. This miracle strongly affected the minds of the people. The holy prelate took this opportunity to make them sensible of the necessity and efficacy of devout prayer, and to improve their salutary dispositions to sincere compunction and penance and a thorough amendment of life. On Easter night a second great fire happened, which alarmed the city more than ever. The zealous pastor had recourse to his usual arms, and poured forth his prayers with many tears, lying prostrate before the altar till the flames were extinguished in a manner which his successor, St Avitus, calls miraculous.<sup>2</sup> During this second conflagration the archbishop formed a pious design of instituting an annual fast and supplication of three days, in which all the faithful should join, with sincere compunction of heart, to appease the divine indignation by fasting, prayer, tears, and the confession of sins. The church of Auvergne, of which St Sidonius was bishop, adopted this pious institution before the year 475, as appears by the letter of St Sidonius quoted above; and it became in a very short time a universal practice. We have two sermons of St Mammertus, one on the Rogations, the other on the repentance of the Ninevites, being the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth among the discourses which bear the name of Eusebius of Emisa. It is clear from the homily of St Avitus, On the Rogations, that St Mammertus regulated the psalms to be sung and the rites to be observed

<sup>1</sup> Sidon. Appolin. lib. vii. Ep. p. 1014.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. de Rogat. p. 136.

on the three Rogation Days. The ancient mass and lessons appointed for them in Gaul are found in the ancient Gallican liturgy, published by Mabillon. Saint Mammertus's younger brother, Mammertus Claudian, who is celebrated by St Sidonius Apollinaris as the greatest scholar of his age, but was much more commendable for his modesty and virtue, being a priest, governed the affairs of his diocese under him. He was author of the hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi prælum certaminis* and other elegant works. He died about the year 474. Our saint survived him three years, dying in 477, and is commemorated in the Roman Martyrology.

Under temporal afflictions we are to remember that God chastises us in this life only in mercy: by these visits he desires to cure the disorderly attachments of our souls, and to compel us to acknowledge that he is our only salvation, comfort, and strength, and to seek him with our whole hearts. To neglect human precautions and remedies against temporal evils would be to tempt God; but so to rely on the means of human prudence as not to have recourse to God by earnest prayer is to refuse to acknowledge our dependence upon him, and to deprive ourselves of his blessing which alone can give success even to natural means. St Mammertus shows that prayer on these occasions must be accompanied with compunction, penance, and alms-deeds. We must begin to implore the divine mercy by renouncing sin as the greatest of evils, the cause of all the chastisements which are inflicted on us, and an evil of an order infinitely superior to all other calamities, insomuch that it is really the only evil we ought truly to fear. Can we hope that God will hear our prayers if we only ask of him what will entertain us in the kingdom of the devil: not his grace, but the things of this world and the objects of our irregular passions? Such petitions are not prayers but inordinate desires. Have we not reason to fear that ours are often such if we cry to God with tears when any temporal calamity threatens us; but are insensible to the miseries of our souls, and cold and remiss under spiritual dangers? If we seek first the kingdom of God and its justice, all other things will be given to us.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 11 :*

BLESSED JOHN ROCHESTER, BLESSED JAMES WALWORTH, and their companions, Carthusians, martyrs in the persecutions in England (Henry VIII) : ST MAIEUL, in Latin MAJOLUS, Abbot of Cluni. He was "very learned and a great encourager of useful studies" : and ST MAMMERTUS.

## MAY 12

ST NEREUS AND ST ACHILLEUS, MARTYRS, CHAMBERLAINS TO ST FLAVIA DOMITILLA, WHO SUFFERED WITH THEM

THEY were eunuchs or chamberlains belonging to St Flavia Domitilla, zealous Christians, and with her were banished by Domitian into a little

isle on the coast of Terracina called Pontia. Their acts say that they were afterwards beheaded at Terracina under Trajan. Their festival was kept at Rome with great solemnity in the sixth age, when St Gregory the Great spoke on it his twenty-eighth homily, in which he says, "These saints before whose tomb we are assembled despised the world and trampled it under their feet, when peace, plenty, riches, and health gave it charms." Their old church in Rome lay in ruins, when Baronius, to whom it gave the title of cardinal, rebuilt it with splendour and restored to it their relics, which had been removed to the Chapel of St Adrian.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 12 :*

ST EPIPHANIUS, Archbishop of Salamis, "who improved himself much in learning by his travels"; most of the books in vogue in his time passed through his hands: ST FLAVIA DOMITILLA and ST NEREUS and ST ACHILLEUS, her chamberlains, martyrs: ST GERMANUS, Patriarch of Constantinople: ST PANCRAS, a noble boy of fourteen years, suffered in the fourth century, under Diocletian: BLESSED JOHN STONE, martyr: and ST RICTRUDES, Abbess, the mother of four saints whom she had educated in maxims of fervent piety; she left the world after her husband's death and died happily aged seventy-four.

MAY 13

ST JOHN THE SILENT, BISHOP, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 559)

[From his excellent life, written by Cyril the monk, his disciple, a little before the death of the saint. See Godeau, *Eloges des Evêques Illustres*, § 56, p. 330.]

JOHN had his surname given him from his love of silence and recollection. He was born at Nicopolis, in Armenia, in the year 454. His descent by both parents was from the most illustrious generals and governors of that part of the empire; but he derived from their virtue a much more illustrious nobility than that of their pedigree. They were solicitous above all things to give their son the most holy education. After their death he, with part of his estate, built at Nicopolis a church in honour of the Blessed Virgin, as also a monastery, in which, with ten fervent companions, he shut himself up when only eighteen years of age, with a view of making the salvation and most perfect sanctification of his soul his only and earnest pursuit, directing to this end all his thoughts and endeavours. As humility is the foundation and guardian of all virtue, this he laboured in the first place to obtain. Accordingly he made it his earnest petition to God; and by assiduous meditation on his own nothingness, his absolute insufficiency, numberless miseries, and baseness, and on the infinite majesty and adorable perfections of God, he studied to know God and himself. He learned sincerely to look upon all manner of humiliations as his due, and to receive them with joy from whatever quarter they were sent; and cheerfully to exercise himself in those which appeared most repugnant to flesh and blood, and most proper to beat down all secret sentiments of pride. To kill the seeds of all other vices he practised the most constant

and severe denial of his will, and he added corporal austerities to subdue his flesh and to fit his soul for the spiritual functions of contemplation and prayer. Not only to shun the danger of sin by the tongue, but also out of a sense of sincere humility and contempt of himself, and the love of interior recollection and prayer, he very seldom spoke; and if necessity obliged him to open his mouth, it was always in very few words and with great discretion. He banished sloth out of his little community as a fruitful source of vice and the poison of all virtue. Some humbling, painful, and useful labour filled up in his house all the intervals of time which public prayer and other necessary duties left vacant. His mildness, prudence, and piety won him the esteem and affection of all his brethren, who strove in every virtue to be the copies of their holy abbot. But, to his extreme affliction, when he was only twenty-eight years old, the Archbishop of Sebaste obliged him to quit his retreat and ordained him Bishop of Colonian, in Armenia, in 482.

In this dignity John preserved always the same spirit and, as much as was compatible with the duties of his charge, continued his monastic austerities and exercises. His brother and nephew, who enjoyed honourable places in the emperor's palace, were moved by his example to contemn the world in the very midst of its honours; and the same grace which sanctifies anchorets in their deserts made them saints in the court. But he found not the same comfort in a brother-in-law, who was governor of Armenia, against whose oppressions of his church the saint was obliged to have recourse to the Emperor Zeno, and readily obtained his protection. St John had fulfilled all the duties of a holy bishop nine years, practising all the austerities of his former life and refusing to allow himself even the necessary conveniences of life, that he might bestow all he possessed on the poor. He instructed his flock by preaching and, by his example, invited them to practise what he taught. He was the comforter of all that were in affliction and bore their burdens with them; and he never ceased to instil sentiments of humility, moderation, and compunction into the hearts of those who lived in the more dangerous flattering state of worldly prosperity. He was the father of all, and carried them all in his heart that he might plant in them the spirit and transfer them into the heart of Christ. Certain evils which he found it impossible for him to remedy, joined with his strong inclination to a retired life, gave him an earnest desire to resign his charge. By the rule of the church and his sacred engagement he was bound not to abandon the spouse to which he was tied, or to leave exposed to wolves a flock which the Supreme Pastor had entrusted to his care. But the divine grace sometimes makes exceptions in order to raise a soul to an extraordinary sanctity. John had reason at first to look upon the thought of such a project as suspected, to examine it impartially, and to consult God for a considerable time by earnest prayer.

The author of his life assures us that whilst he was watching one night in prayer he saw before him a bright cross formed in the air, and heard a voice which said to him, "If thou desirest to be saved, follow this light." He then seemed to see it move before him, and at length point out to the Laura of St Sabas. Being satisfied what the sacrifice was which God required at his hands, he found means to abdicate the episcopal charge, and embarked in a vessel bound for Palestine. He went first to Jerusalem, and having there performed his devotions, retired to the neighbouring Laura of St Sabas, which at that time contained one hundred and fifty fervent monks, all animated with the spirit of their holy founder and superior. St John was then thirty-eight years old. St Sabas first placed him under the steward of the Laura to fetch water, carry stones, and serve the workmen in building a new hospital. John came and went like a beast of burden, continuing always recollected in God, always cheerful and silent. After this trial the experienced superior appointed him to receive and entertain strangers. The blessed man served everyone as if he had served Christ himself, whom he considered in his members; and all persons were exceedingly edified with his humility and devotion. St Sabas observed every step and admired to see the behaviour of this young monk in an employment which is often dangerous to the monastic spirit, even in those that are most advanced. For the dissipation of such an attendance seemed in no way to interrupt his attention to God or abate his spirit of recollection. St Sabas by this time clearly perceived that his novice was already a masterly proficient in the monastic profession and eminently endowed with the spirit of his vocation. Therefore, to afford him opportunities of the greatest spiritual progress by uninterrupted contemplation, he allowed him a separate hermitage; which was his method only with regard to the more perfect. During five days in the week, which he passed without taking any nourishment, John never left his cell; but on Saturdays and Sundays he attended the public worship of God in the church. After passing three years in this eremitical life he was made steward of the Laura. His virtue drew a blessing on the community; neither was his employment any distraction to his mind. Such, indeed, was his love of God that his soul stood in need of no effect to think continually on him. Such a habit is not to be attempted at once. Too strained an attention might hurt the head, as experience has sometimes shown. This practice, and a constant attention to the divine presence, is to be acquired at first by frequent ejaculations to God during exterior actions, repeated at intervals; either such as naturally occur to the devout mind, or select ones of divine praise, compunction, love, &c., such as are contained in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, or other parts of the inspired writings. By this method such a practice in John grew habitual, and by daily use became more perfect and familiar.



Our saint had discharged this last office four years when St Sabas, judging him worthy to be promoted to the priesthood, presented him to the patriarch Elias. When they came to the church of Mount Calvary, where the ordination was to be performed, St John said to the patriarch, "Holy father, I have something to impart to you in private; after which, if you judge me worthy, I will receive holy orders." The patriarch took him aside, and John, having obtained from him a promise of secrecy, said, "Father, I have been ordained a bishop; but on account of the multitude of my sins have fled, and am come into this desert to wait the visit of the Lord." The patriarch was startled and calling in St Sabas, said to him, "I desire to be excused from ordaining this man, on account of some particulars he has discovered to me." St Sabas went back much afflicted, fearing lest John had been formerly guilty of some grievous crime. Under this uncertainty God revealed to him, at his request, the state of the affair. Whereupon, calling for John, he complained to him of his unkindness in concealing the matter from him. Finding himself discovered, John was for quitting the Laura, nor could St Sabas prevail on him to stay but on a promise never to divulge the secret. John lived after this four years in his cell without speaking to anyone except to the person who brought him necessaries. In the year 503 the factious spirit of certain turbulent disciples obliged St Sabas to quit his Laura. St John, that he might have no part in such an unhappy disturbance, withdrew into a neighbouring wilderness, where he spent six years in silence, conversing only with God and subsisting on the wild roots and herbs which the desert afforded. When St Sabas was called home again, he went to seek St John in his desert and brought him back in 510. But a long and happy experience had taught him that a soul which has been accustomed to converse only with God finds nothing but emptiness and bitterness in anything besides. His love of obscurity and humility made him desire more and more to live unknown to men; but the lustre of his sanctity was such as rendered it impossible for him to succeed herein to the full extent of his desire. He went back with his old master and confined himself for forty years to his cell after his return to the Laura; but did not refuse instructions to those who resorted to him; among whom was the judicious and learned monk Cyril, who wrote his life when the saint had lived forty years in his hermitage, after his return, and was one hundred and four years old. He at that age retained the vigour of his mind and that sweetness which rendered him always amiable and venerable. The same author tells us that whilst he was conversing one day with St John on matters of piety, he saw a man named George bring his son, who was a child possessed by the devil, and lay him on the ground before the saint without speaking a word. St John understood the miserable condition of the child and made the sign of the cross on his forehead with blessed oil, and the same

instant the child was delivered from the evil spirit. A nobleman of Constantinople, who was infected with Eutychianism, was introduced by one Theodorus to the saint. The holy man gave his blessing to Theodorus but refused it to the nobleman, with a mild reproach for his schism and heresy, who, seeing that he could only have been apprized of these circumstances by revelation, became upon the spot a most devout Catholic. St John, by his example and counsels, conducted many fervent souls to God, and continued in his hermitage to emulate, as much as this mortal state will allow, the glorious employment of the heavenly spirits in an uninterrupted exercise of love and praise, till he passed to their blessed company soon after the year 558; having lived seventy-six years in the desert, which had only been interrupted by the nine years of his episcopal dignity.

His astonishing austerity, love of silence, and sublime contemplation condemn the unmortified spirit and dissipation of the world. Interior recollection is, as it were, the soul of Christian virtue. Without it the most active zeal and devotion will only be superficial. A dissipated heart can never be truly devout. One that is united with God and relishes the sweetness of his divine converse finds the tumult of creatures and the noise of the world an insupportable burden, and he truly understands from experience what pure joy holy solitude is able to afford. A love of Christian silence, or a silence of virtue and choice, not of stupidity or sullenness, is a proof that a soul makes it her chiefest delight to be occupied on God and finds no comfort like that of conversing with him. This is the paradise of all devout souls.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 13 :*

ST JOHN THE SILENT, Bishop : ST PETER REGALATI, who, having lost his father in his thirteenth year, became a Franciscan friar noted for his penances; he died in 1456 : BLESSED ROBERT BELLARMINE : ST SERVATIUS, who resisted the Arians, entertained St Athanasius during his banishment and foretold the invasion of Gaul by the Huns; a saint of prayer and penances : and ST WALBURGA, sister to Saints Willebald and Winebald, devoted, like them, to the conversion of Germany.

MAY 14

ST BONIFACE, MARTYR

(ABOUT THE YEAR 307)

[From his authentic Acts in Henschenius, p. 283; Fleury, &c.]

THERE lived at Rome, about the beginning of the fourth century, a certain lady called Aglaë, young, beautiful, and well born, and so rich and fond of making a figure in the world that she had entertained the city three several times with public shows at her own charge. Her chief steward was one Boniface, with whom she entertained a criminal commerce. This

man, though addicted to wine and all kinds of debauchery, was, however, remarkable for three good qualities: hospitality, liberality, and compassion. Whensoever he saw a stranger or traveller he would assist him very cordially; and he used to go about the streets and into the public places in the night-time and relieved the poor according to their necessities. After several years commerce in the vicious way already mentioned, Aglaë, touched with a motion of divine grace and feeling some compunction within herself, called Boniface to her and thus opened her mind to him: "You are sensible how deep we are plunged in vice, without reflecting that we must appear before God to give an account of all our actions. I have heard say that they who honour those that suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ shall have a share in their glory. In the East the servants of Jesus Christ every day suffer torments and lay down their lives for his sake. Go thither, then, and bring me the relics of some of those conquerors, that we may honour their memories and be saved by their assistance." Boniface came into the proposal; and having raised a considerable sum of money to purchase the bodies of the martyrs from their executioners and to distribute among the poor, said to Aglaë on his departure, "I won't fail to bring back with me the relics of martyrs, if I find any; but what if my own body should be brought to you for that of a martyr?" She reproved him for jesting in a matter so serious. The steward set out, but was now entirely a new man. Penetrated with sentiments of compunction, in all that long journey from Rome into the East he neither ate meat nor drank wine; and his fasts he accompanied with prayers, tears, and penitential works. The church at that time enjoyed peace in the West, but in the East the persecution, which had been begun by Diocletian, was carried on with great cruelty by Galerius Maximianus and Maximinus Daïe. It raged most fiercely in Cilicia, under an inhuman governor named Simplicius. Boniface therefore directed his journey to Tarsus, the capital of that country. He no sooner arrived at the city, but alighting, he sent away all his servants with the horses to an inn and went himself straight to the court of the governor, whom he found seated on his tribunal, and many holy martyrs suffering under their tortures: one hung up by the feet, with his head over a fire; another stretched almost to the tearing of his limbs on four planks or stakes; a third sawn asunder; a fourth had his hands cut off; a fifth was fixed to the ground by a stake run through his neck; a sixth, having his hands and feet tied behind him, the executioners were beating with clubs. There were no less than twenty tortured after this cruel manner, the sight whereof shocked the beholders, while their courage and resolution filled them with amazement. Boniface went boldly up to these champions of Christ and, having saluted them, cried out, "Great is the God of the Christians, great is the God of the holy martyrs. I beseech you, the servants of Jesus

Christ, to pray for me, that I may join with you in fighting against the devil." The governor thought himself insulted by so bold an action in his presence and asked him in great wrath who he was. The martyr answered that he was a Christian, and that having Jesus Christ for his master, he feared nothing the governor could inflict to make him renounce that sacred name. Simplicius, in a rage, ordered some reeds to be sharpened and thrust under his nails; and this being done, he commanded boiling lead to be poured into his mouth. Boniface, after having called upon Jesus Christ for his assistance, begged the prayers of the other expiring martyrs, who all joined in putting up their petitions to God for him. The people, disgusted with so much cruelty, began to raise a tumult and cried out, "Great is the God of the Christians." Simplicius was alarmed and withdrew. But the next day, being seated on his tribunal, he ordered Boniface to be brought before him a second time. The martyr appeared constant and undaunted. The judge commanded him to be cast into a cauldron of boiling pitch; but he came out without receiving any hurt. Lastly, he was condemned to lose his head; and after a short prayer for the pardon of his sins and the conversion of his persecutors, he cheerfully presented his neck to the executioner. His companions in the meantime, not finding him return to the inn, searched for him in those parts of the city where they thought him most likely to be found. Being at last informed by the jailer's brother that a stranger had been beheaded the day before for his faith in Christ, and being shown the dead body and the head, they assured him that it was the very person they were in search of, and beseeched him to bestow the martyr's relics upon them; this he refused to do without a reward; so they paid down five hundred pieces of gold; and having embalmed it, carried it home with them, praising God for the happy end of the blessed martyr. Aglaë, upon information of the affair, gave God thanks for his victory, and taking some priests with her, met the corpse with tapers and perfumes half a mile out of Rome, on the Latin road; and in that very place raised a monument in which she laid them, and some years after built a chapel. She from that time led a penitential retired life and, dying fifteen years after, was buried near his relics. They were found in Rome in 1603, together with those of St Alexius, in the church in Rome formerly called of St Boniface, but now of St Alexius. The bodies of both St Boniface and St Alexius lie under the stately high altar in two rich marble tombs. The martyrdom of St Boniface happened about the year 307.

Whilst we praise the divine mercy, who of sinners maketh saints, we ought earnestly to pray that he change our hearts from vessels of corruption into vessels of grace and his divine charity. Regret and sorrow for sin has many degrees; but till it has entirely subdued the corruptions,

changed the affections, and purified the heart, it is not a saving repentance,<sup>1</sup> or that charity and love which animates or impregnates the new creature.<sup>2</sup> The certain proof of regeneration or of a real conversion is victory. "He that is born of God overcometh the world."<sup>3</sup> The maxims of the gospel, the rules of the church, and reason itself forbid us to look upon him as a sincere convert whose life is very uneven, unconstant, and contradictory in itself—if he be to-day a saint and to-morrow a sinner; if he follow to-day the impulses of the Holy Ghost and yield to-morrow to the temptations of the enemy; or if he has not courage to fly the dangers and renounce the occasions which are fatal to him.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 14 :*

ST BONIFACE, martyr : ST GARTHAGH (OR CARTHAGE ?) THE YOUNGER, commonly called MOCHUDU ; a poor boy, working as a swineherd, he met the holy Bishop, Carthagh the Elder, became his disciple and, being ordained, took his name. He was made Bishop of Kier-raigh, founded the Monastery of Rathin and governed it for forty years. The rule he drew up was "scarcely less austere than that of La Trappe in our day," says Butler. BLESSED MICHAEL GARICOITS : ST PACHOMIUS, said to have received instruction regarding the monastic life from an angel : and ST PONTIUS, an illustrious martyr of primitive times, said to have suffered under Valerian about the year 258.

## MAY 15

### SAINTS PETER, ANDREW, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

(A.D. 250)

[From their authentic acts in Ruinart.]

IN the neighbourhood of Lampsacus, a city of Lesser Asia near the Hellespont, was apprehended in the persecution of Decius a young man called Peter, remarkable for the beauty of his person and natural endowments of his mind, but much more for his faith and virtue. He was brought before Optimus, the proconsul of Asia, who said to him, "You have before your eyes the edicts of our invincible princes; sacrifice to the goddess Venus as they command." Peter answered, "I am surprised that you should endeavour to persuade me to sacrifice to an infamous lewd woman, whose actions modesty forbids me to mention and are such as are punishable by your own laws." Optimus ordered him to be extended on a wheel, with pieces of wood so disposed and bound on his body with iron chains, that the wheel being put in motion it might gradually occasion the breaking of his bones. The martyr, turning his eyes towards the heavens, said, with a cheerful countenance "I praise and thank you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for vouchsafing me patience to overcome this cruel tyrant." Optimus, seeing his unshaken resolution, ordered his head to be struck off.

After this execution, as the proconsul was going to set out for Troas, a city in Phrygia built by Alexander near the ruins of the famous Troy, three other Christians—Andrew, Paul, and Nicomachus—were brought

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 6.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John v. 4.

before him. He asked them whence they came and what was their religion. Nicomachus answered with impatience and a remarkably loud voice, "I am a Christian." The others modestly replied, "We are also Christians." The proconsul said to Nicomachus, "Sacrifice to the gods." He answered, "A Christian must not sacrifice to devils." The proconsul gave orders that he should be hung on the rack and tortured. When he was just ready to expire under his torments, he unhappily lost his crown and cried out, "I never was a Christian, and am ready to sacrifice to the gods." The proconsul immediately caused him to be taken off the rack, but no sooner had the miserable man offered sacrifice than he was seized by the devil, fell on the ground, and beat it with his head in violent agonies, in which he expired. Thus the devil usually laughs to scorn the unhappy souls which he has drawn into sin. He lures them with great promises; but, being the father of lies, pays them with treacherous shadows, or often with bitter disappointments and calamities. A wretched exchange for their souls and eternal happiness! God afforded his other two servants a comfort under their affliction for this loss. Denysa, a tender virgin about sixteen years old, who was standing by, was struck at this misfortune and said, "Unfortunate wretch! why wouldst thou bring upon thyself eternal torments for the sake of a moment's ease?" Optimus, hearing these words, asked if she was a Christian; she confessed she was. He then required her to sacrifice, and threatened to expose her to prostitution and burn her alive in case of refusal. Finding his threats made no impression on her constancy, he ordered her to be put into the hands of two lewd young men to be deflowered. They took her with them to their lodgings, whose endeavours to force her she resisted so long that she fairly tired them out. About midnight they were surprised at the appearance of a young man glittering with light, which diffused itself over the whole house; upon which they were seized with fear and cast themselves at the feet of the holy virgin. She raised them up and bid them not be afraid, saying, "This is my guardian and protector"; and they earnestly besought her to intercede for them that they might come to no hurt. The next morning the mob, stirred up by the priests of Diana, beset the house of the proconsul demanding in a tumultuous manner to have Andrew and Paul delivered up to them. The proconsul, to humour them, having caused the martyrs to be brought forth, bid them sacrifice to Diana; which they refusing to do, he ordered them to be most inhumanly scourged and then to be put into the hands of the rabble, by them to be stoned to death. The populace without further delay, having tied their feet together, dragged them out of the town in order to stone them. Whilst they were under execution, Denysa heard the noise and began to weep and wail bitterly; and having escaped from those who guarded her, ran to the place where they were, and upon seeing

them, cried out, "That I may live with you eternally in heaven, I will die with you on earth." The proconsul being informed of the wonderful preservation of her chastity, her escape, and desire to die with the martyrs, ordered her to be taken away from Andrew and Paul and to be beheaded at a distance, which was accordingly put in execution.

If the martyrs had not been crucified to the world, they would never have attained to their crowns. There is a love of the world, which though it be not, either for the matter or the degree of it, criminal enough to destroy the hopes of salvation, yet abates our vigour, hinders our perfection, and bereaves us of many degrees of fervour. The indications of this kind of love of the world are a fondness for the pomp and show of life; too slavish an exactness in the modes and customs of the world; too quick a sense of praise, reputation, and pre-eminence; too great an eagerness to grow rich; too brisk a relish of pleasures; too much diversion; too great a love of ease; or an uninterrupted pursuit of worldly business, which extinguishes all gust of virtue and all relish of heavenly things, and leaves not the mind sufficient leisure or ardour for spiritual duties. These are symptoms of a soul tainted with a love of the world, which exceedingly checks the vigour of the mind. The means by which this defect is to be overcome is frequent meditation on eternal truths. One who has these deeply imprinted in his heart will have no great taste of the honours, or the pleasures, or the interests of life; he will never be slothful or remiss, but always fervent in spirit serving the Lord; and will have no emulation but for good works, no ambition but for eternal glory. In the pursuit of this he will lay out the vigour and strength of his mind, retrench his profit by alms, deny his pleasure, and rejoice to lead an obscure, mean, laborious, and crucified life.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 15 :*

ST DYMPNA, virgin, daughter of a pagan Irish king and a Christian mother, who passed to Antwerp where she was martyred in defence of her chastity : ST GENEBRARD or GENEBERN, martyr, a priest who had baptized St Dymrna; he followed her in her flight and was beheaded by her murderers : ST JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE, the most famous Christian educationist of the seventeenth century; he founded the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools : ST PETER, ST ANDREW, and their COMPANIONS : and, in the Dioceses of England, OUR LADY OF GRACE.

## MAY 16

### ST JOHN NEPOMUCEN, MARTYR

(A.D. 1383)

[From his life, collected by F. Balbin, the Jesuit, published by Papebroke with preliminary remarks, t. iii. Maij, p. 667; also Benedict XIV, de Canoniz. SS., and his life in French by F. Marne, Jesuit, printed in Paris in 1741, and St Joan. Nepomuceni vita a Berghaver, cum figuris. Pragæ, 1736, folio.]

THIS servant of God possessed in an eminent degree the virtues of a perfect anchorite and of a zealous apostle, and by his death merited the

crown of a glorious martyr. His martyrdom was the more illustrious, because the religious seal of confession (or strict obligation to silence in that tribunal on the part of the priest) not having yet armed tyrants against it, had found no victims before our saint. He was born at Nepomuc, a little town in Bohemia some leagues from Prague, about the year 1330. His parents derived from their virtue a splendour which their birth or rank in the world did not afford them. If our saint had fewer obstacles from the world to overcome in giving himself to God, his sacrifice was not less fervent, less generous, or less perfect in the disposition of his heart. He was regarded as the fruit of his parents' prayers. Soon after his birth his life was despaired of; but their confidence in God deserved to obtain his recovery through the intercession of the Holy Virgin Mary, which they earnestly implored in the church of a neighbouring Cistercian monastery. Gratitude moved them to consecrate their son to the service of God. They neglected nothing to give him a good education; nor could a child give more promising hopes of future greatness by his mildness, gentleness, docility, simplicity, devotion, and extraordinary application and capacity in his studies. The morning he spent in the neighbouring monastery in hearing several masses, which he did with a modesty and fervour that charmed those who saw him. When he had learned the first elements at home he was sent to Staaze, a considerable town, to study Latin. He excelled his schoolfellows in grammar, but surpassed himself in rhetoric. Charles IV, Emperor of Germany and King of Bohemia, and author of the Golden Bull in 1356, had lately founded the University of Prague, in imitation of those at Paris and Padua. John being sent thither, distinguished himself in philosophy, divinity, and canon law; in which two last faculties he proceeded doctor. He had from his tender years regarded the priesthood as the great object of his pious ambition, that he might devote himself in the most perfect manner to promote the divine honour; and he always made the most frequent and devout participation of the adorable sacrament of the altar a kind of novitiate to that dignity. He increased the fervour of his preparation as he grew nearer the term, and retired from the hurry of the schools and the city into a solitude, there, by fasting, prayer, and penance for a month purifying his soul and disposing himself for the grace of that holy order, which he received at the hands of his bishop. This prelate being acquainted with his extraordinary talents, commanded him immediately to employ them in preaching, and committed to him the care of the parish of Our Lady of Tein. Surprising were the first effects of his zeal. The whole city flocked to hear him, and in a short time appeared very much reformed. The students, who were then not fewer than forty thousand, thronged to his discourses, and many hardened libertines returned from hearing him knocking their breasts and full of compunction.



The archbishop and canons preferred to him a canonry; but his constant attendance in the choir did not hinder or abate his zealous application to all his former functions in the care of souls. The Emperor Charles IV, having reigned thirty-two years, renowned for wisdom and piety, died at Prague in 1378, crowned with the benediction of his subjects. For though he had achieved no great exploits, he had always been a lover and protector of the church and his people. By great largesses to the electors he procured his son Wenceslas to be chosen King of the Romans in 1376. This prince succeeded him in the empire upon his death, the year following, being only sixteen years old. Intoxicated with power and flattery, he discovered early symptoms of the most savage and vicious inclinations, by which he has deserved the infamous surnames of the Slothful and the Drunkard. He resided at Prague, and hearing high commendations of St John, he pitched upon him to preach the Lent to his court. The holy man saw how difficult and dangerous a task it would be to make the emperor relish the genuine truths of the gospel, as he was not unacquainted with his stupid and brutish temper. However, he accepted the employ, and was much applauded by the court and by the emperor himself; and his discourses proved for some time a check to his passions. In testimony of his esteem he offered the saint the first vacant bishopric, which was that of Leitomeritz, but no motives could prevail upon him to accept of that dignity. It was thought that perhaps the care and labours inseparable from such a charge contributed to his refusal. He was therefore offered the provostship of Wischeradt, which (next to the bishoprics) is the first ecclesiastical dignity in the kingdom of Bohemia, and to which are annexed great revenues of one hundred thousand German florins a year, with the honourable title of hereditary chancellor of the kingdom, and this without dangers or fatigues. But to reason thus is not to know the saints. If they refuse great places when they present labours to their zeal and crosses to their virtue, what must they think of those which offer nothing but riches and honours? The virtuous canon was therefore here again as firm as ever. But the more he shunned the esteem of men the more it followed him. He, however, accepted soon after the office of almoner of the court, which could only give him an authority and assistance the better to perform his duty as preacher to the court, and enable him in a private capacity to assist the poor and to gain souls to God. Nor had this charge either the distractions or the riches or honours which had so much affrighted him in the dignities before mentioned. Thus humility fixed him in the court whither ambition leads others. He appeared there the same man he had been in his private life. His apartment was the rendezvous of all that were in affliction or distress. He declared himself their general advocate, and the father of the poor and of all who suffered by unjust oppressions. His charity was also sagacious in finding out and

secretly reconciling all dissensions which arose in the court or city: of many whereof authentic monuments are still preserved, in which the patience of this great man, his penetration and judgment, and the equity of his decisions, are equally admired. He found time for everything, because the saints, who in temporal concerns forget themselves, find more leisure than other men for the service of their neighbours.

The Empress Jane, daughter of Albert of Bavaria, Earl of Hainault and Holland, was a most virtuous and accomplished princess. Touched by the divine unction of the holy preacher, she chose him for the director of her conscience. The emperor loved her with the most violent passion: but as he was capricious and changeable, he often abandoned himself to fits of jealousy which, joined to the natural fierceness and brutish fury of his temper, gave the princess much to suffer. As the world is saved by the sufferings of a God, so it is by afflictions that all the saints are crowned. To make the empress one by the crucifixion of her heart to whatever might divide it from God, the Lord employed the persecution of her husband, which was sometimes cruel to the utmost excess. But he gave her a comforter and guide in our saint, by whose counsels she squared her life. What fruit did not she reap by this means in a few years! Supported by a man whose zeal prepared him to martyrdom, she learned to suffer her afflictions with joy. Not only this princess, but all the virtuous persons of the court, sought to have the saint for their director, and he seemed to possess the talent of making saints upon the throne and in the court, and men happy upon the cross. He also took upon him the direction of the nuns of the Castle of Prague, whom he conducted in the exercises of a spiritual life in such a manner that this house became a model of perfection to all others. The empress, though always a person of virtue, became much more devout after she began to follow his advice. She became altogether religious and was not afraid to appear such. The churches were the ordinary places in which she was to be found: she spent in them whole days on her knees, and in a recollection which was the admiration of everyone. Her prayers were only interrupted by offices of charity to the poor (whom she served with her own hands), or by a short time for meals and relaxation, which she passed in conversing with her ladies on eternity and spiritual matters, on which she spoke with an ardour which bespoke her own fervour. This fire she nourished in her heart by the frequent use of the sacraments and the practice of perpetual mortification. Such was her holy fear of God that the very shadow of the least sin made her tremble; and upon the fear of the least failing or imperfection she hastened to expiate it in the sacred tribunal of penance, from which she never came but with a heart broken with sorrow and her eyes bathed in tears.

As a corrupted heart turns everything into poison, Wenceslas grew

the more impatient and extravagant by the piety of his consort, and by the tenderness and condescension with which she always behaved towards him; and in the return of a fit of mad jealousy he made her virtuous conduct an argument for his suspicions. To know her interior he formed a design of extorting from St John what she had disclosed to him in the secret of confession, by which means he thought he should learn all the private sentiments she had ever entertained concerning him. In this view he sent for the holy man and at first began indirectly to sift him, and at length openly put to him his impious questions. The saint, struck with horror, represented to him in the most respectful manner possible how notoriously injurious such a sacrilege was both to reason and religion. But the emperor, who had been long accustomed to deal with slaves, thought no one ought to resist his will. However, in the end, he dissembled his rage; but the saint saw in his dark gloomy silence what he was to expect from so revengeful a prince. It happened one day that the tyrant finding a fowl not roasted to his taste at table, gave an order, surpassing, if possible, the extravagances of Caligula or Heliogabalus, that the cook should be immediately spitted and roasted alive at the same fire at which the fowl had been dressed. The officers were preparing to execute the barbarous sentence, which no one durst contradict, when St John was informed of it; the poor servant was already pierced with several spits and broiling before the fire when the saint ran in and threw himself at the emperor's feet. Wenceslas neither listened to his remonstrances nor regarded the threats of divine vengeance; but the more earnestly the saint pressed him, the more outrageous he grew. At length he commanded him to be thrown into a dungeon, where he lay several days, rejoicing in his chains, being sensible that the true cause was his former firmness in refusing to disclose the confession of the empress. Nor did Wenceslas make a mystery of it; for he sent him this message: that as long as he refused to disclose to him the confession of the empress there was for him no hope of liberty. Yet, some days after, a gentleman of the palace came with an order to release him, begging, in the emperor's name, that he would forget the ill treatment he had received and dine the next day with his majesty, who had prepared a great entertainment for his sake, and to do him honour before his whole court. He was accordingly treated with the greatest magnificence and exterior marks of esteem and kindness. After the banquet Wenceslas dismissed all the rest and began to discourse with the saint in private, first, about indifferent matters, but in the end pressing him all manner of ways to lay open to him the confession of the empress, promising secrecy and all honours and riches, and threatening a refusal with the most horrible tortures and death. The saint answered firmly and made fresh attempts to satisfy him on the justice and obligation of his silence. The tyrant at last gave orders that he should

be carried back to prison and inhumanly tortured. He was stretched on a sort of rack; burning torches were applied to his sides and to the most sensible parts of his body; he was burnt at a slow fire and tormented other ways. Under his tortures he pronounced no other words but the sacred names of Jesus and Mary, and when loosened from the rack was left half dead. Our Lord visited his servant in this abandoned condition and filled his soul with the most sweet consolations. In the meantime the empress was informed, and by her prayers, tears, and importunities obtained of Wenceslas the enlargement of the servant of God. He therefore appeared again at court, but like a persecuted saint, full of joy and courage, showing by his countenance that he regarded his sufferings as the favours of heaven. Notwithstanding the present good humour of the prince, he prepared himself for death; and as if to take leave and to supply by extraordinary labour the shortness of his time, he began to preach with greater zeal than ever. In one of these sermons, on that text, "A little while and you shall not see me," he often repeated, "I have now but little time to speak to you"; and in the close of his discourse clearly foretold, in a prophetic rapture and shedding abundance of tears, the evils which were shortly to fall on the church of Bohemia, literally verified in the Hussite tumults and civil wars. Coming out of the pulpit, having taken the last leave of his auditory, he begged pardon of the canons and clergy for the bad example which he humbly accused himself to have given them. From that day he gave himself up totally to those exercises which were a more immediate preparation of his own soul for eternity; in which, to obtain the protection of the glorious mother of God, he visited her image at Buntzel, which had been placed there by the apostles of the Sclavonians, SS. Cyril and Methodius, and is a place of great devotion among the Bohemians. He was returning home in the evening, after having poured forth his soul in most fervent prayer in that holy place, when the emperor, looking out of a window of his palace, saw him pass alone in the streets of Prague. The sight of the holy man renewed his indignation and sacrilegious curiosity, and ordering him to be immediately brought in to him, he fiercely bade him choose either to reveal the confessions of the empress or to die. The saint made no answer, but by his silence and the steadiness of his countenance gave him sufficiently to understand that he was not to be moved, and by bowing his head expressed his readiness to die. At which the emperor cried out in his fury, "Take away this man, and throw him into the river as soon as it shall be dark, that his execution may not be known by the people." The barbarous order was executed, and after some hours, which the martyr employed in preparing himself for his sacrifice, he was thrown off the bridge which joins the Great and Little Prague into the river Muldaw, with his hands and feet tied, on the vigil of the Ascension, the 16th of May 1383. The martyr was no sooner

stified in the waters but a heavenly light appeared over his body, floating on the river, and drew many to the banks. The empress ran in to the emperor, not knowing what had happened, and inquired what was the occasion of the lights which she saw on the river. The tyrant, struck at the news, fled in a hurry, like a man distracted, to a country house, forbidding anyone to follow him. The morning discovered the villainy, and the executioners betrayed the secret. The whole city flocked to the place; the canons of the cathedral went in procession, took up the body with great honour and carried it into the Church of the Holy Cross of the Penitents, which was the next to the place where the body was found. Everyone resorted thither to kiss the hands and feet of the glorious martyr, to recommend himself to his prayers, and to procure, if possible, some relic of his clothes or what else had belonged to him. The emperor, being informed of this, sent an order to the religious Penitents to hinder any tumults in their church and secretly to remove the body. They obeyed: but the treasure was discovered; and as soon as the canons had made everything ready for its magnificent reception in the cathedral, it was conveyed thither with the utmost pomp by the clergy and whole city and interred with this epitaph, which is yet read, engraved on a stone upon his tomb: "Under this stone lies the body of the most venerable and most glorious Thaumaturgus JOHN NEPOMUCEN, doctor, canon of this church, and confessor of the empress, who, because he had faithfully kept the seal of confession, was cruelly tormented and thrown from the Bridge of Prague into the river Muldaw, by the orders of Wenceslas IV, Emperor and King of Bohemia, son of Charles IV, 1383." Many miraculous cures of the sick, under the most desperate disorders, during the translation and interment of his relics and at his tomb, through his intercession, were public testimonies of his favour with God.

The empress, after this incident, led a weak languishing life till the year 1387, when she closed it by a holy and happy death. The emperor stayed some months in the Castle of Zebac, some leagues from Prague, hardening himself against the voices of heaven, fearing at first a sedition of the people; but religion taught the virtuous part their duty to their sovereign. Seeing, therefore, the things remain quiet in the city, he returned to it and wallowed in his former slothful voluptuous life. But he soon felt that the punishment of a notorious sinner follows close upon his crime. The empire was torn with civil wars in all its parts. The Switzers, revolting from Albert of Austria, set up their commonwealth without opposition: the emperor himself sold to John Galeas the duchy of Milan for one hundred thousand florins, and for money alienated many others of the richest provinces, one after another. The princes and states, in the very year 1383, sent to entreat the tyrant to leave Bohemia and reside in the empire, to put a stop to the growing evils. He laughed at the deputies,

and said if there were any malcontents among them it was their duty to come to him. The states and princes of the empire at length entered into a general confederacy at Mentz, and deposed him from the imperial throne in 1400; and meeting at Laenstein, in the archbishopric of Triers, chose first Frederick Duke of Brunswick and Lunenbourg, and he dying in a few days substituted Robert or Rupert of Bavaria, Count Palatine of the Rhine. Wenceslas, drowned in debaucheries, seemed insensible at this affront. The nobility of Bohemia, by the advice of his brother Sigismund, King of Hungary, confined him twice; but he found means to escape and died of an apoplexy, without having time, in appearance, to think of repentance. This indolence fortified the Hussite heresy, broached in his reign by John Huss, rector of the university, and his disciple Jerom of Prague, which for above one hundred years filled the kingdom with civil wars, bloodshed, plunder, sacrileges, the ruin of families and every other calamity.

The tomb of the saint continued illustrious for frequent miracles, and was protected by a wonderful providence from profanations, which were often attempted by the Hussites and again by the Calvinists in 1618, in the wars of Frederick the elector palatine. On that occasion several officers and workmen, who set themselves to demolish the tomb of the saint, were deterred by visible judgments and some by sudden death upon the spot, which was the misfortune, among others, of a certain English gentleman. The complete victory by which the imperialists under the command of the Duke of Bavaria, under the walls of Prague in 1260, recovered this kingdom is ascribed to the intercession of this holy martyr; who, as many attested, was seen appearing in glory with other patrons by the guards in the cathedral the night before the battle, and whose protection the imperial army had earnestly implored: from which circumstance the illustrious house of Austria has shown a particular devotion to his memory. The Emperors Ferdinand II and III solicited his canonization, which was at length procured by Charles VI. In 1719, on the 14th of April, the saint's tomb was opened, where the body had lain three hundred and thirty years. The flesh was consumed, but the bones entire and perfectly joined together, with the marks of his fall into the river behind his head and on his shoulders. His tongue alone was found fresh and free from corruption as if the saint had but just expired. The saint had been honoured as a martyr from the time of his death in Bohemia; but, to make his veneration more authentic and universal, his canonization was demanded, and several new miracles were juridically approved at Prague and Rome. Innocent XIII confirmed his immemorial veneration by a decree equivalent to a beatification; and the bull of his solemn canonization was published by Benedict XIII in 1729. A narrative of many miracles wrought by his intercession may be read at the end of

his life, as the wonderful preservation of the city of Nepomuc from the plague in 1680; the cure of various distempers in persons despaired of by the physicians; the deliverance of many from imminent dangers, and the protection of the innocence of many falsely accused. The Count of Althan, afterwards Archbishop of Bari, in the fall of a balcony in the palace of Constable Colonna at Rome, was saved by St John appearing in a vision, whose intercession he invoked aloud. Cardinal Michael Frederick Althan, Viceroy of Naples, was cured of a paralytic disorder by which he had entirely lost the use of one arm, and of a complication of several other distempers, the moment he began to address his prayer to St John on his festival in the Minims Church. Pope Benedict XIII dedicated an altar under the invocation of St John Nepomucen in the Lateran basilic.

In the sacrament of penance so indispensable is the law of secrecy, and so far does it extend, that the minister is bound by all laws so much to be upon his guard in this respect that he may say with an ancient writer, "What I know by confession, I know less than what I do not know at all." St John Climacus remarks that a special providence watches over the fidelity of this sacred seal: "For," says he, "it is unheard of that sins disclosed by confession should be divulged, lest others should be deterred from confessing, and all hope of health be cut off."<sup>1</sup> Without this indispensable secrecy the very precept and obligation ceases.<sup>2</sup> And this law is expedient also to the public weal; for by it the minister will often draw sinners from dangerous designs which otherwise could never come to his knowledge, as F. Coton showed to the entire satisfaction of Henry IV of France.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 16 :*

ST ABDAS, martyr, Bishop of Cascar in Chaldea : ST ABDJESUS, or HABEDJESUS, martyr, also Bishop of Cascar, who, with sixteen priests, nine deacons, six monks, and seven virgins, suffered unto death on this date : ST BRENDAN THE ELDER, Abbot in Ireland, a disciple of St Finian at Clonard : ST HONORATUS, in French HONORÉ, Bishop of Amiens about 660 : ST JOHN NEPOMUCEN : ST SIMON STOCK, a native of Kent : and ST UBALDUS, Bishop of Gubio or Gubbio, of whom it is told that the Holy Scriptures were his chief delight.

## MAY 17

### ST PASCHAL BAYLON, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1592)

[From his two lives, one written by John Ximenes, his companion ; the other, in order to his canonization. See other monuments in Papebroke, t. iv. Maij, pp. 48, 132.]

THE state of poverty was honoured by the choice of our blessed Redeemer and hath been favoured with his special blessing. It removes men from many dangers and temptations, and furnishes them with perpetual occasions

<sup>1</sup> St John Clim. Ep. ad Paston. c. 13.

<sup>2</sup> See Suarez in 3 p. disp. 23, Sect. 2, and others.

for the exercise of self-denial, patience, penance, resignation to the divine will, and every other heroic Christian virtue; yet these great means of salvation are by many, through ignorance, impatience, and inordinate desires, often perverted into occasions of their temporal and eternal misery. Happy are they who by making a right use of the spiritual advantages which this state, so dear to our divine Redeemer, offers them, procure to themselves present peace, joy, and every solid good; and make every circumstances of that condition in which providence hath placed them a step to perfect virtue and to everlasting happiness. This in an eminent degree was the privilege of St Paschal Baylon. He was born in 1540, at Torre-Hermosa, a small country town in the kingdom of Arragon. His parents were day-labourers and very virtuous; and to their example our saint was greatly indebted for the spirit of piety and devotion, which he seemed to have sucked in with his mother's milk. Their circumstances were too narrow to afford his being sent to school; but the pious child, out of an earnest desire of attaining to so great a means of instruction, carried a book with him into the fields where he watched the sheep and desired those that he met to teach him the letters; and thus, in a short time, being yet very young, he learned to read. This advantage he made use of only to improve his soul in devotion and piety; books of amusement he never would look into; but the lives of the saints and, above all, meditations on the life of Christ, were his chiefest delight. He loved nothing but what was serious and of solid advantage at a time of life in which many seem scarce susceptible of such impressions. When he was of a proper age he engaged with a master to keep his flocks as under shepherd; he was delighted with the innocent and quiet life his state permitted him to lead. That solitary life had charms for him. Whatever he saw was to him an object of faith and devotion. He read continually in the great book of nature; and from every object raised his soul to God, whom he contemplated and praised in all his works. Besides external objects he had almost continually a spiritual book in his hands, which served to instruct and to inflame his soul in the love and practice of virtue. Often was he seen ravished in holy prayer; and frequently was not able to conceal from the eyes of men the vehement ardour of the divine love with which his soul melted in an excess of heavenly sweetness. He felt in himself what many servants of God assure us of, that "the consolation which the Holy Ghost frequently infuses into pious souls is greater than all the pleasures of the world together, could they be enjoyed by one man. It makes the heart to dissolve and melt through excess of joy, under which it is unable to contain itself."<sup>1</sup> In these sentiments did this servant of God sing with David: "My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall be delighted in his salvation. All my bones shall say, O Lord, who is like

<sup>1</sup> Ruysbroch, Spir. Nupt. lib. ii. c. 19.



to thee!"<sup>1</sup> The reward of virtue is reserved for heaven; but some comforts are not denied during the present time of trial. Even in this vale of tears, "God will make its desert as a place of pleasure; and its wilderness as the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of praise."<sup>2</sup> It is sufficiently understood that the saint did not receive these heavenly comforts without severe interior trials and a constant practice of self-denial, by which his heart was crucified to the world. The dew of extraordinary spiritual comforts never falls on unmortified souls, which seek the delights of this world. St Paschal in his poverty joined alms with his continual prayer; and not having any other means to relieve the poor, always gave them a good part of his own dinner which was sent him into the fields.

How great soever his love was for his profession, he found, however, several difficulties in it which made him think of leaving it. He was not able, notwithstanding all the care he could take, to hinder a flock of goats he had in charge from sometimes trespassing on another's ground. This occasioned his giving over the inspection of that flock. But he found other troubles in taking care of other cattle. Some of his companions, not having the same piety with himself, were but too much addicted to cursing, quarrelling, and fighting; nor were they to be reclaimed by his gentle rebukes on these accounts. He was therefore determined to leave them, not to participate in their crimes. And to learn the will of God in this important choice of a state of life in which he might most faithfully serve him, he redoubled his prayers, fasts, and other austerities. After some time spent in this manner, he determined to become a religious man. Those to whom he first disclosed his inclination to a religious state pointed out to him several convents richly endowed. But that circumstance alone was enough to disgust him; and his answer was: "I was born poor, and I am resolved to live and die in poverty and penance." Being at that time twenty years of age, he left his master, his friends, and his country, and went into the kingdom of Valentia where was an austere convent of barefoot reformed Franciscans called Soccolans, which stood in a desert solitude, but at no great distance from the town of Montfort. He addressed himself to the fathers of this house for spiritual advice; and, in the meantime, he entered into the service of certain farmers in the neighbourhood to keep their sheep. He continued here his penitential and retired life in assiduous prayer, and was known in the whole country by the name of the Holy Shepherd. To sequester himself from the world he made the more haste to petition for the habit of a lay-brother in the house above mentioned, and was admitted in 1564. The fathers desired to persuade him to enter himself among the clerks, or those who aspired to holy orders and sing the divine office in the choir;

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxiv.<sup>2</sup> Isa. li. 3.

but they were obliged to yield to his humility and admit him among the lay-brothers of the community. He was not only a fervent novice, which we often see, but also a most fervent religious man, always advancing and never losing ground. Though his rule was most austere, he added continually to its severity, but always with simplicity of heart, without the least attachment to his own will; and whenever he was admonished of any excess in his practices of mortification, he most readily confined himself to the letter of his rule. The meanest employments always gave him the highest satisfaction. Whenever he changed convents, according to the custom of his Order, the better to prevent any secret attachments of the heart, he never complained of anything, nor so much as said that he found anything in one house more agreeable than in another; because, being entirely dead to himself, he everywhere sought only God. He never allowed himself a moment of repose between the church and cloister duties and his work; nor did his labour interrupt his prayer. He had never more than one habit, and that always threadbare. He walked without sandals in the snows and in the roughest roads. He accommodated himself to all places and seasons, and was always content, cheerful, mild, affable, and full of respect for all. He thought himself honoured if employed in any painful and low office to serve anyone.

The general of the Order happening to be at Paris, Paschal was sent thither to him about some necessary business of his province. Many of the cities through which he was to pass in France were in the hands of the Huguenots, who were then in arms. Yet he offered himself to a martyrdom of obedience, travelled in his habit, and without so much as sandals on his feet was often pursued by the Huguenots with sticks and stones, and received a wound on one shoulder of which he remained lame as long as he lived. He was twice taken for a spy; but God delivered him out of all dangers. On the very day on which he arrived at his convent from this tedious journey, he went out to his work and other duties as usual. He never spoke of anything that had happened to him in his journey unless asked; and then was careful to suppress whatever might reflect on him the least honour or praise. He had a singular devotion to the mother of God, whose intercession he never ceased to implore that he might be preserved from sin. The holy sacrament of the altar was the object of his most tender devotion; also the passion of our divine Redeemer. He spent, especially towards the end of his life, a considerable part of the night at the foot of the altar on his knees or prostrate on the ground. In prayer he was often favoured with ecstasies and raptures. He died at Villa Reale, near Valentia, on the 17th of May in 1592, being fifty-two years old. His corpse was exposed three days, during which time the great multitudes which from all parts visited the church were witnesses to many miracles by which God attested the sanctity of his servant.

St Paschal was beatified by Pope Paul V in 1618, and canonized by Alexander VIII in 1690.

If Christians in every station endeavoured with their whole strength continually to advance in virtue, the church would be filled with saints. But alas! though it be an undoubted maxim that not to go on in a spiritual life is to fall back, "Nothing is more rare," says St Bernard, "than to find persons who always press forward. We see more converted from vice to virtue than increase their fervour in virtue." This is something dreadful. The same father assigns two principal reasons. First, many who begin well after some time grow again remiss in the exercises of mortification and prayer and return to the amusements, pleasures, and vanities of a worldly life. Secondly, others who are regular and constant in exterior duties neglect to watch over and cultivate their interior; so that some interior spiritual vice insinuates itself into their affections and renders them an abomination in the eyes of God. "A man," says St Bernard,<sup>1</sup> "who gives himself up entirely to exterior exercises without looking seriously into his own heart to see what passes there, imposes upon himself, imagining that he is something whilst he is nothing. His eyes being always fixed on his exterior actions, he flatters himself that he goes on well, and neither sees nor feels the secret worm which gnaws and consumes his heart. He keeps all fasts, assists at all parts of the divine office, and fails in no exercise of piety or penance; yet God declares, 'His heart is far from me.' He only employs his hands in fulfilling the precepts, and his heart is hard and dry."

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 17 :*

ST CATHAN, Bishop; the Isle of Bute, which holds his relics, is often called Kilcathan: ST MADEN OF MADERN, honoured in Brittany, also in Cornwall where he lived and died in a hermitage near Land's End; a chapel there was long famed for his miracles: ST MAW (in Cornish, "a boy"); the saint, an Irishman who came to Cornwall, is associated with a well which bears his name: ST PASCHAL BAYLON: ST POSSIDIUS, Bishop, educated under the great St Augustine, whose life he wrote and whose works he catalogued: and ST SILAVE or SILAN, Bishop in Ireland, an Irish monk who passed the latter part of his life in Italy, where he was called "the father of the poor."

MAY 18

## ST ERIC, MARTYR, KING OF SWEDEN

(A.D. 1151)

[See Israelis Erlandi liber de vitâ et miraculis S. Erii Regis, ex editione et cum notis Joan. Schefferi, in 8vo. Holmiæ, 1675; and Henschenius, t. iv. Maij, p. 186.]

ERIC was descended of a most illustrious Swedish family; in his youth he laid a solid foundation of virtue and learning and took to wife Christina, daughter of Ingo IV, King of Sweden. Upon the death of King Smercher in 1141, he was, purely for his extraordinary virtues and qualifications,

<sup>1</sup> St Bern. Serm. 2, in Cap. Jejunij.

placed on the throne by the election of the states, according to the ancient laws of that kingdom. His first care in that exalted and dangerous station was to watch over his own soul. He treated his body with great severity, fasting and watching much, in order to keep his domestic enemy in due subjection to the spirit, and to fit himself for the holy exercises of heavenly contemplation and prayer, which were his chief delight. He was truly the father and the servant of all his people. With indefatigable application he himself administered to them justice, especially to the poor to whose complaints his ears were always open and whose grievances and oppressions he took care himself to redress. He often visited in person the poor that were sick and relieved them with bountiful alms. Content with his own patrimony, he levied no taxes. He built churches, and by wholesome laws restrained the brutish and savage vices of his subjects. The frequent inroads of the idolatrous Finlanders upon his territories obliged him to take the field against them. He vanquished them in a great battle; but after his victory he wept bitterly at the sight of the dead bodies of his enemies which covered the field, because they had been slain unbaptized. When he had subdued Finland he sent St Henry, Bishop of Upsal, to preach the faith of Christ to that savage infidel nation, of which he may be styled the apostle. Among the subjects of this good king were certain sons of Belial, who made his piety the subject of their ridicule, being mostly obstinate idolaters. Magnus, son of the King of Denmark, blinded by ambitious views to the crown of Sweden, put himself at the head of these impious malcontents and engaged them in a conspiracy to take away the life of their sovereign. The holy king was hearing mass on the day after the feast of the Ascension when the news was brought him that the rebels were in arms and on the march against him. He calmly answered, "Let us at least finish the sacrifice; the remainder of the festival I shall keep elsewhere." After mass he recommended his soul to God, made the sign of the cross and, to spare the blood of the citizens who were ready to defend his life at the expense of their own, marched out alone before his guards. The conspirators rushed upon him, beat him down from his horse, and struck off his head with a thousand indignities in derision of his religion. His death happened on the 18th of May 1151. God honoured his tomb with many miracles. It remains to this day at Upsal undefaced. St Eric was honoured as chief patron of the kingdom of Sweden till the change of religion in the sixteenth century. He ordered the ancient laws and constitutions of the kingdom to be collected into one volume, which bears the title of King Eric's Law, or the Code of Uppland, highly respected in Sweden. It was confirmed in the thirteenth century by the learned King Magnus Ladulas, who compiled and published in 1285 another code under the title of *Gardsrætte*.

All power and authority among men is derived from God, as Christ declared to Pilate,<sup>1</sup> and as the wise man often repeats. Whence St Paul teaches us that "he who resisteth power, resisteth the ordinance of God."<sup>2</sup> On no men doth he confer the least degree of jurisdiction but with the most severe injunction and obligation that they employ it according to his will, and in the first place for the advancement of his divine honour. Hence every father, master of a family, magistrate, or king is accountable to God for those under his charge, and will be condemned as a traitor on the last day if he employs not all the means in his power that God may be known, praised, and faithfully served by them. This is the primary obligation of those whom God hath vested with authority. In the faithful discharge of this trust the glorious St Eric laid down his life.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 18 :*

ST ERIC, King and martyr: ST POTAMON, Bishop of Heraclea in Egypt, "doubly a martyr under the heathens and under the Arians," as St Athanasius writes: ST THEODORUS and seven virgins; these heroic women, who had grown old in virtue, were delivered over to incredible insults, having no defence but their prayers and tears; Theodotus, a vintner, a Christian, who had been educated by one of them, was exhorted by her in a vision to rescue their bodies and informed that he should die for the faith within two days: ST VENANTIUS, a very young martyr, to whom Pope Clement X had a particular devotion.

#### MAY 19

### ST DUNSTAN, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

HE was a native of the town of Glastonbury, of noble birth, and received his education under certain Irish monks who were excellent masters of the sciences and at that time resided at Glastonbury, which the wars had left in a most ruinous condition. Dunstan outstripped his companions in every branch of literature which he thought worth his attention, and through the recommendations of Athelmus, Archbishop of Canterbury, his uncle, with whom he had lived some time, was called to the court of the great King Athelstan, a lover of virtue and learned men. Dunstan had in his youth received the clerical tonsure and the lesser orders, and from his cradle been fervent in practising every means of virtue, especially of modesty, purity, and humility. After he left the court he took the monastic habit, being advised thereto by Elphegus the Bald, Bishop of Winchester, also his uncle, who not long after ordained him priest. When he was well grounded in the knowledge and practice of the duties of his profession, the bishop, on giving him proper instructions for his conduct, sent him to Glastonbury with the view of serving that church. Here he built for himself a small cell five feet long and two and a half broad, with an oratory adjoining to the wall of the great church, which was dedicated

<sup>1</sup> John xix.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xiii. 2.

under the invocation of the Mother of God. In this hermitage he spent his time in praying and fasting. He had also his hours for manual labour, which is a part of penance and necessary to shun idleness. His labour consisted in making crosses, vials, censers, and sacred vestments; he likewise painted and copied good books. King Athelstan dying after a glorious reign of sixteen years, the throne was filled by his brother Edmund, who succeeded to the crown in 900. His palace of Chedder was but nine miles from Glastonbury, to which church he often resorted with singular devotion, and having been long acquainted with the sanctity of St Dunstan he installed him the nineteenth abbot of that house from St Brithwald, who was the first Englishman who had governed it two hundred and seventy years before. King Edmund had reigned only six years and a half when he was treacherously murdered, and buried at Glastonbury. His sons Edwi and Edgar being too young to govern, his brother Edred was called to the crown, who did nothing but by the advice of St Dunstan. He ended his pious life in 955 and was succeeded by his nephew Edwi, a most debauched and profligate youth who, on the very day he was anointed king, left his nobles at the royal banquet to go to see his harlot and impious flatterers. St Dunstan followed him and endeavoured by a severe check to put him in mind of the duty which he owed to God and men. In requital the tyrant banished him, persecuted all the monks in his kingdom, and ruined all the abbeys which had escaped the devastation of the Danes except Glastonbury and Abingdon.

St Dunstan spent one year in exile in Flanders and, according to Osbern, at St Peter's at Ghent, where his vestment is still shown; but, according to John of Glastonbury, at St Amand's; the tradition and monuments of both places show that he divided the year betwixt them. He filled all Flanders with the odour of his sanctity and the examples of his virtues; but the Mercians and northern provinces shaking off the yoke of the tyrant Edwi, placed the crown on Edgar, who immediately recalled St Dunstan, made him his principal counsellor, and in 957 preferred him to the bishopric of Worcester, to which he was consecrated by St Odo, Archbishop of Canterbury. The see of London becoming vacant shortly after, he was compelled at the same time also to govern that diocese, notwithstanding his opposition, the public disorders requiring so strenuous a reformer of discipline and manners. King Edwi having reigned over all England one year and over the southern part four years, ended a wicked life by an unhappy death in 959, when Edgar became sole monarch of the English nation, which he governed with the greatest courage, prudence, and glory. In 961 St Dunstan was raised to the metropolitan see of Canterbury, though he used every device possible to decline that dignity. He was, moreover, appointed by the pope, John XII, legate of the holy see. Being vested with this authority, he set himself about re-establishing

everywhere ecclesiastical discipline, which had been much impaired by the confusion of the Danish invasions and the tyranny of King Edwi; in which he was powerfully protected by King Edgar and assisted by his two disciples, St Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, and St Oswald, Bishop of Worcester and Archbishop of York. These three prelates restored most of the great monasteries in England. To establish in them a uniform and perfect regular discipline, St Dunstan compiled the Concord of Rules, extant in Reyner and Spelman, in which he incorporates several old monastic customs with the rule of St Bennet. The reformation of the clergy was no less the object of his zeal. For their use he drew up excellent regulations, which may be seen in Spelman<sup>1</sup> under this title: Canons published under King Edgar. Several among the secular clergy were, through the disorder of the time, fallen into so open a violation of the canons as to presume to marry. These St Dunstan expelled from the churches and monasteries into which they had intruded themselves and brought in monks in their place who had been in possession of divers of them before the Danish devastations. At Winchester, when St Ethelwold had ejected the secular canons for incontinency and placed monks in his cathedral, the former appealed from his proceedings. A synod therefore was held at Winchester in 968. In this venerable assembly was heard a voice, as coming from a crucifix in the place, which said distinctly, "God forbid it should be so. You have judged well: to change your decree is not good." Upon which the synod confirmed what St Ethelwold had done, and King Edward the martyr made this decree a law of the state.

St Dunstan was no less vigorous in maintaining discipline among the laity, in which no motives of human respect were ever able to daunt him or to damp his zeal. King Edgar had the misfortune to fall into a scandalous crime by deflowering a virgin who had been educated in the monastery of Wilton, and who, to elude his pursuits, had put on a religious veil but had not made any profession or vows. St Dunstan being informed of this scandal, went in haste to the court and, like another Nathan, reproved the king in a zealous but respectful manner. The prince, struck with remorse, begged with many tears that a suitable penance might be enjoined him, and became a faithful imitator of the royal penitent David. The archbishop enjoined him a penance for seven years; during which term he was never to wear his crown, was ordered to fast twice a week, and to give large alms. Another part of his penance was to found a nunnery in which many holy virgins might consecrate themselves chaste spouses to Christ, in satisfaction for his crime in having violated a virgin. These conditions the king faithfully performed, and founded a rich monastery of nuns at Shaftesbury. The term of his penance being elapsed in 973, St Dunstan, in a public assembly of the lords and prelates, set the crown

<sup>1</sup> Conc. Angl. t. i. p. 447.

again upon his head. This great king ruled sixteen years and, dying in the thirty-second year of his age, left the kingdom to his eldest son, Edward the Martyr. The death of that pious young prince was a grievous affliction to St Dunstan, who, when he crowned his younger brother in 979, foretold the weakness and the dreadful calamities of his reign. The Welsh bishops had always been governed by the Archbishop of St David's till about the year 983, when we find Gacon consecrated Bishop of Landaff by St Dunstan; from which time the see of St David's lost its metropolitical jurisdiction.

St Dunstan frequently visited the churches over the whole kingdom, everywhere preaching and instructing the faithful with great zeal. Such was the dignity and eloquence with which he delivered the word of God that few were so hardened as to withstand the power of his exhortations. He employed his revenues in relieving the poor; he reconciled differences, refuted errors, and laboured incessantly in extirpating vices and abuses. But neither the care of his church nor the attendance he was obliged often to give to the state made him ever forget to find time for holy prayer and retirement; and after the occupations of the day he watched late at night in the private communications of his soul with God. Glastonbury was his dearest solitude, and thither he would often retire from the world to devote himself entirely to heavenly contemplation. At Canterbury it was always his custom to visit in the night, even in the coldest weather, the Church of St Austin, without the walls, and that of the Blessed Virgin adjoining to it. Finding himself taken ill in that city, he prepared himself for his last hour by redoubling his fervour in all his practices of penance and devotion. On the feast of the Ascension of our Lord he preached thrice on that triumphant mystery, exhorting all to follow our Redeemer and Head in spirit and desire. Whilst he spoke, his countenance, like that of Moses coming down from the mount, seemed to shine and dart forth rays of light. In the close of the last discourse he begged the prayers of his audience, and told his flock that God called him from them. At which words all that heard him were filled with inexpressible grief. In the afternoon he went again to the church and appointed a place for his burial; then he took to his bed, and on the Saturday following, the 19th of May, having received the Viaticum, he calmly expired; closing his corporeal eyes to the world and at the same instant opening those of his soul to behold God with his angels in glory. His death happened the 19th of May 988, the sixty-fourth of his age and the twenty-seventh of his archiepiscopal dignity. He was buried in his own cathedral in the place he had appointed. John of Glastonbury relates that his bones were translated to Glastonbury in 1012, two years after the martyrdom of St Elphege; but this at most could only be true of some portion thereof, for in 1508 Archbishop Warham found his relics remaining under his monument, which was then



on the south side of the high altar. See his life in Mabillon (*Sæc. Ben.* v. p. 659), by Osbern, Precentor of Canterbury in 1070, and that by Eadmer in 1121; in Wharton, t. i. p. 211. See also John of Glastonbury, in his history of that abbey, published by Mr Hearne, t. i. p. 115 ad p. 147, likewise Henschenius, t. iv. Maij, p. 344.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 19:*

ST DUNSTAN, Bishop: ST PETER CELESTINE, "raised by humility above the world and preserved from its poison amidst its flatteries and its frowns": BLESSED PETER WRIGHT, priest, English martyr 1651: and ST PUDENTIANA, a sister of St Praxedes. They were daughters of a Roman senator, who was converted to the Faith by St Peter and St Paul.

MAY 20

## ST BERNARDIN OF SIENNA, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1444)

[From his two lives, written with great exactness by two of his intimate friends—the one the same year in which he died, by Barnaby of Sienna; the other by Maffei Veggio, soon after his death. See Henschenius, t. v. Maij, p. 257.]

ST BERNARDIN, a true disciple of St Francis and an admirable preacher of the word of God, inflamed with the most ardent love of our divine Redeemer, was made by God an instrument to kindle the same holy fire in innumerable souls and to inspire them with his spirit of humility and meekness. He was born at Massa in 1380, of the noble family of Albizeschi, in the republic of Sienna. He lost his mother when he was but three years old, and his father, who was chief magistrate of Massa, before he was seven. The care of his education devolved on a virtuous aunt called Diana, who infused into his tender soul ardent sentiments of piety towards God and a tender devotion to his blessed Mother. This aunt always loved him as if he had been her own son; and indeed his towardly dispositions won him exceedingly the affections of all who ever had the care of him. He was modest, humble, and devout; and took great delight in prayer, visiting churches, serving at mass, and hearing sermons which he would repeat again to his companions with an admirable memory and gracefulness of action. In that tender age he had a great compassion for the poor. One day it happened that his aunt sent away a poor person from the door without an alms because there was but one loaf in the house for the dinner of the family. Bernardin was much troubled to see the beggar go away unrelieved and said to his aunt, "For God's sake, let us give something to this poor man; otherwise I will neither dine nor sup this day. I had rather the poor should have a dinner than myself." This wonderfully comforted his good aunt, who never ceased to incite him to all virtues and, according to his strength, to accustom himself by degrees to fasting. Young as he was, he fasted every Saturday in honour of the Blessed Virgin, which pious custom he always continued. At eleven years of age he was

called to Sienna by his uncles and put to school under the ablest masters, who all admired the quickness of his parts and the solidity of his judgment; but much more his docility, modesty, and virtue. If he chanced to hear any word the least unbecoming he, by blushing, testified what confusion it gave him and how much it wounded his very heart; and though he was otherwise most condescending, civil, and respectful to all, he could never bear with patience any indecent discourse. For a single word of that kind he so severely reprimanded a man of quality that it was to him a warning during the remainder of his life to govern his tongue; and many years after, hearing Bernardin preach, he was so moved that he seemed to be drowned in tears. The modesty of the virtuous youth was a check to the most impudent, and kept them in awe in his presence; in whatever company, if the conversation was too free, it was dropped when he appeared and the very loosest rakes would say, "Hush! here comes Bernardin," as the presence of Cato among the Romans restrained the lewd libertinism of a festival.<sup>1</sup> Nor did the saint behave on these occasions in such a manner as might render virtue the subject of ridicule, but with a surprising dignity. Nevertheless, an impure monster had once the insolence to make an attempt upon his virginal purity and to solicit him to sin. But the saint, not content to testify his scorn and indignation, excited the whole troop of his little innocent playfellows against the lewd villain, who pelted him with clods and stones and made him ashamed any more to show his face. Bernardin was exceedingly comely and beautiful; but his known virtue secured him from any further assaults, and he never ceased to beg of God the grace of purity, particularly through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. When he had completed the course of his philosophy he applied himself to the study of civil and canon law, and afterwards to that of the holy scriptures with such ardour that he could never from that time relish any other study.

At seventeen years of age he enrolled himself in the confraternity of our Lady in the hospital of Scala to serve the sick. Here he began with new vigour to tame his flesh by severe fasts, watchings, hair-shirts, disciplines, and other austerities; but he applied himself more to the interior mortification of his will, which rendered him always most mild, sweet, patient, and affable to everyone. He had served this hospital four years when, in 1400, a dreadful pestilence which had already made great havoc in several other parts of Italy, and was increased by the concourse of pilgrims to the jubilee, reached Sienna, insomuch that twelve, eighteen, or twenty persons died every day in this hospital, and among others were carried off almost all the priests, apothecaries, and servants that belonged to the place. Bernardin therefore persuaded twelve young men to bear him company in the service of the hospital, expecting heaven for their

<sup>1</sup> Martial, epigr.

speedy recompense; and they all strove which should come up the nearest to Bernardin in cheerfulness, humility, and assiduity in performing the most abject offices and in exerting themselves in the service of the sick. The saint was intrusted in a manner with the whole care of the hospital which, in the space of four months, he put into excellent order. It is hardly credible how many lives he saved, or with what charity and pains he night and day attended the patients and furnished them with every comfort and succour which it was in his power to afford them. God preserved him from the contagion during these four months, at the end of which the pestilence ceased. He then returned home, but sick of a fever which he had contracted by his fatigues, which obliged him to keep his bed four months; during which time he edified the city no less by his resignation and patience than he had done by his charity. He was scarce well recovered when he returned to the like works of charity, and with incredible patience attended a dying aunt for fourteen months, named Bartholomæa, a woman of great piety who was blind and bed-ridden. When God had called her to himself Bernardin retired to a house at some distance from the city, making the walls of his garden the bounds of his enclosure. Here in solitude, fasting, and prayer he endeavoured to learn the will of God in the choice of a state of life. After some time he took the habit of the Order of St Francis among the fathers of the Strict Observance at Colombiere, a solitary convent a few miles from Sienna; and after the year of his novitiate made his profession on the 8th of September 1404. Having been born on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, out of devotion to her he chose the same day for the principal actions of his life; on it he took the religious habit, made his vows, said his first mass, and preached his first sermon. His fervour increased daily; and whilst some sought interpretations to mollify the severity of the rule, he was always studying to add to it greater austerities and heroic practices of virtue, the more perfectly to crucify in himself the old man. He was pleased with insults and humiliations and whatever could be agreeable to the most ardent spirit of humility and self-denial. When he went through the streets in a threadbare short habit the boys sometimes cast stones at him, with injurious language; in which contempt the saint found a singular joy and satisfaction. He showed the same sentiments when a near kinsman with bitter invectives reproached him as disgracing his friends by the mean and contemptible manner of life he had embraced. These and all other virtues he learned in the living book of Christ crucified, which he studied night and day often prostrate before a crucifix, from which he seemed one day to hear our Lord speak thus unto him: "My son, behold me hanging upon a cross: if thou lovest me, or art desirous to imitate me, be thou also fastened naked to thy cross and follow me; thus thou wilt assuredly find me." In the same

school he learned an insatiable zeal for the salvation of souls, redeemed by the blood of Christ. Having in retirement prepared himself for the office of preaching, his superiors ordered him to employ his talent that way for the benefit of others. He laboured under a natural impediment from weakness and hoarseness of voice: the removal of which obstacle he obtained by addressing himself to his glorious patroness the Mother of God. For fourteen years his labours were confined to his own country, but when the reputation of his virtue was spread abroad he shone as a bright light to the whole church.

Zealous ministers who are filled with the Spirit of God are a great blessing to the people among whom they labour; and this reflection unfolds the secret how saints possess so extraordinary a grace of converting souls to God. This was the excellent talent of Bernardin. They who heard him preach felt their souls to melt in sentiments of compunction, divine love, humility, and the contempt of the world, and returned home new men, striking their breasts and bathed in tears. The word of God was in his mouth as a fire, and as a hammer breaking the hardest rocks. Another eminent preacher of his Order being asked the reason why his sermons did not produce equal fruit with those of Bernardin, answered, "Brother Bernardin is a fiery glowing coal. What is only warm hath not the power of kindling a fire in others like the burning coal." The saint himself, being consulted what was the way to preach with profit, gave this rule: "In all your actions seek in the first place the kingdom of God and his glory; direct all you do purely to his honour; persevere in brotherly charity, and practise first all that you desire to teach others. By this means the Holy Ghost will be your master and will give you such wisdom and such a tongue that no adversary will be able to stand against you." This he faithfully practised, and from his assiduous communication with God he imbibed that eminent spirit of virtue which gave him the most powerful ascendant over the hearts of men. Among the great truths of religion he principally laboured to inculcate a sincere contempt of the vanity of the world and an ardent love of our blessed Redeemer. He wished he could cry out with a trumpet which could be heard over the whole earth, that he might sound aloud in the ears of all men that great oracle of the Holy Ghost: "O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity and seek after lying?"<sup>1</sup> "O children, how long will you love childishness?"<sup>2</sup> And he never ceased with the thunder of his voice to raise men from grovelling always on this earth to the important considerations of the things which belong to their eternal welfare and to the love of Jesus Christ. So much was he affected with the mysteries of the incarnation and sufferings of the Son of God that he could never pronounce his sacred name without appearing in transports

<sup>1</sup> Ps. iv. 3.<sup>2</sup> Prov. i. 22.

of love and adoration. Often at the end of his sermon he showed to the people the sacred name of Jesus curiously cut on a board with gold letters, inviting them to adore Christ with him on their knees, reciting a pious doxology. This was misconstrued by some, who also cavilled at certain expressions which he had used. Upon their complaints Pope Martin V summoned him to appear and commanded him silence for a while. The humble saint meekly acquiesced without making any reply. But his holiness, after a full examination of his doctrine and conduct, dismissed him with his benediction, high commendations, and ample leave to preach everywhere. The same pope pressed him to accept the bishopric of Sienna in 1427; but he declined that dignity, alleging for his excuse that if he were confined to one church he could no longer employ himself in the service of so many souls. In 1431 he no less resolutely refused that of Ferrara which Eugenius III earnestly desired to confer upon him, and again that of Urbino in 1435. When the saint preached first at Milan, the haughty Duke Philip Mary Visconti<sup>1</sup> took offence at certain things which he had said in his sermons, and threatened him with death if he should presume to speak any more on such subjects; but the saint declared that no greater happiness could befall him than to die for the truth. The duke, to try him, sent him a present of one hundred ducats of gold in a golden bowl. The saint excused himself from receiving the money to two different messengers; but being compelled by a third to accept it, he took the messenger with him to the prisons and laid it all out in his presence in releasing debtors. This disinterestedness turned the duke's aversion into the greatest veneration for the saint ever after.

St Bernardin preached several times through the greatest part of Italy; some say also in Spain, but this seems uncertain. Nothing was more spoken of over all Italy than the wonderful fruit of his sermons, miraculous conversions, restitution of ill-gotten goods, reparations of injuries, and heroic examples of virtue. The factions of the Guelfs and Ghibellins then horribly divided many cities of Italy and gave frequent employment to the saint. Hearing once of a great dissension at Perugia, he hastened thither from the marquisate of Ancona, and entering the city thus addressed the inhabitants: "God, who is highly offended at this division among you, hath sent me as his angel to proclaim peace to men of good will upon earth." After preaching four sermons to persuade them to a mutual forgiveness of all injuries and a general amnesty, at the end of the last he bade all those who forgave each other and desired to live in peace to pass to the right hand. All present did so except one young nobleman, who stayed on the left, muttering something between his teeth. The

<sup>1</sup> In him was extinct the family of Visconti, descended by a younger branch from one of the Lombard kings. They were first viscounts or deputy-governors, and afterwards dukes of Milan; which sovereignty, upon the death of Philip Mary Visconti, in 1447, devolved upon Francis Sforza, his general, to whom he had given his natural daughter in marriage. Whence ensued the bloody wars between the emperors, French and Milanese.

saint, after a severe reproach, foretold him his sudden death, which happened soon after and without the benefit of the sacraments. In 1433 he accompanied the Emperor Sigismund to his coronation at Rome; after which he retired for a short time to Sienna, where he put the finishing hand to his works.

Amidst the greatest applause and honours, the most sincere humility always appeared in his words and actions; and he ever studied to conceal the talents with which God had enriched him. How great his esteem of humility was he testified when a brother of his order asked him the means by which he might speedily arrive at perfection. The saint, instead of giving him any answer by words, threw himself at his feet; showing at the same time his own great affection to humility, and also that this virtue raises the soul to divine love and every grace. God, however, was pleased to honour his servant before men. Besides several predictions and miraculous cures of many lepers and other sick persons, the saint is recorded to have raised four dead to life. He was appointed vicar-general of his Order of the Strict Observance in Italy in 1438, in which he settled a rigorous reformation, but after five years obtained a discharge from his office; and in his old age continued the function of preaching through Romania, Ferrara, and Lombardy. He returned to Sienna in 1444, preached a most pathetic farewell sermon at Massa on concord and unity, and being taken ill of a malignant fever on the road still preached as usual till he arrived at Aquila in Abruzzo. There, being confined to his bed, he prepared himself for his passage out of this life by the rites of the church. When he was speechless he made a sign to be taken off his bed and laid upon the floor; where, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he surrendered his pure soul into the hands of his Creator on the 20th of May 1444, after a life of sixty-three years, eight months, and thirteen days. His tomb was rendered illustrious by many miracles, and he was canonized by Nicholas V in 1450. His body is kept in a crystal shrine, enclosed in one of silver, in the church of his Order at Aquila.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 20 :*

BLESSED ANNA MARIA TAIGI : ST BERNARDIN OF SIENNA : ST ETHELBERT, King of the East Angles, whom he ruled for forty-four years according to the maxims of a saint ; he was treacherously murdered by an officer of King Offa : BLESSED YVO, Bishop of Chartres, of the Order of Regular Canons of St Austin, an ornament of the eleventh century.

## MAY 21

### ST GODRICK, HERMIT

HE was born of very mean parents at Walpole, in Norfolk, and in his youth carried about little peddling wares which he sold in villages. Having by degrees improved his stock, he frequented cities and fairs and made several voyages by sea to traffic in Scotland. In one of these he called at

Holy Island, or Lindisfarne, where he was charmed and exceedingly edified with the retirement and religious deportment of the monks, and especially with the account which they gave him of the wonderful life of St Cuthbert. He inquired of them every particular relating to him, visited every corner of that holy solitude and of the neighbouring isle of Farne, and falling on his knees, prayed with many tears for grace to imitate the fervour of that saint in serving God, resolving for that purpose to give up all earthly pretensions. He entered upon a new course of life by a penitential devout pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and visited Compostella in his way home. After his return into Norfolk he accepted the charge of house steward in the family of a very rich man. The servants were not very regular, and for their private junketings often trespassed upon their neighbours. Godrick finding he was not able to prevent these injustices, and that the nobleman took no notice of his complaints about them, being easy so long as he was no sufferer himself, left his place for fear of being involved in the guilt of such an injustice.

After making a pilgrimage to St Giles in France and to Rome, he went to the north of England in order the better to carry into execution his design of devoting himself wholly to a retired life. A fervent servant of God named Godwin, who had passed a considerable time in the monastery of Durham, and by conversing with the most holy monks and exercising himself in the interior and exterior practices of all virtues was well qualified to be a director to an inexperienced novice, joined our saint, and they led together an austere anchoretical life in a wilderness situated on the north to Carlisle, serving one another and spending both the days and nights in the praises of God. After two years God called Godwin to himself by a happy death after a short sickness. St Godrick, having lost his companion, made a second painful pilgrimage to Jerusalem. After his return he passed some time in the solitude of Streneshalch, now Whitby; but after a year and some months went to Durham to offer up his prayers before the shrine of St Cuthbert, and from thence retired into the desert of Finchal or Finkley, three miles from Durham near the river Wear. St John Baptist and St Cuthbert he chose for his principal patrons and models. The austerities which he practised are rather to be admired than imitated. He had his regular tasks of devotion consisting of psalms and other prayers which he had learned by heart, and which he constantly recited at midnight, break of day, and the other canonical hours, besides a great number of other devotions. Though he was ignorant of the very elements of learning, he was too well experienced in the happy art of conversing with God and his own soul ever to be at a loss how to employ his time in solitude. Whole days and nights seemed too short for his rapturous contemplations, one of which he often wished with St Bruno

he could have continued without interruption for eternity in inflamed acts of adoration, compunction, love, or praise. His patience under the sharpest pains of sicknesses or ulcers and all manner of trials was admirable, but his humility was yet more astonishing. His conversation was meek, humble, and simple. He concealed as much as possible from the sight and knowledge of all men whatever might procure their esteem, and he was even unwilling anyone should see or speak with him. Yet this he saw himself obliged to allow on certain days every week to such as came with the leave of the Prior of Durham, under whose care and obedience he lived. A monk of that house was his confessor, said mass for him, and administered him the sacraments in a chapel adjoining to his cell which the holy man had built in honour of St John Baptist. He was most averse from all pride and vanity, and never spoke of himself but as of the most sinful of creatures, a counterfeit hermit, an empty phantom of a religious man; lazy, slothful, proud, and imperious, abusing the charity of good people who assisted him with their alms. But the more the saint humbled himself the more did God exalt him by his grace and by wonderful miraculous gifts. For several years before his death he was confined to his bed by sickness and old age. William of Newbridge, who visited him during that time, tells us that though his body appeared in a manner dead, his tongue was ever repeating the sacred names of the three divine Persons, and in his countenance there appeared a wonderful dignity accompanied with an unusual grace and sweetness. Having remained in this desert sixty-three years, he was seized with his last illness and happily departed to his Lord on the 21st of May 1170, in the reign of Henry II. His body was buried in the chapel of St John Baptist. Many miracles confirmed the opinion of his sanctity, and a little chapel was built in his memory by Richard, brother to Hugh Pidsey, Bishop of Durham. See William of Newbridge, lib. ii. c. 20; Matthew Paris, Matthew of Westminster, his life wrote by Nicholas of Durham his confessor, and abridged by Harpsfield, Sæc. 12, c. 45. See also the English Calendars and those of the Benedictines, especially Menard's and Edw. Maihew. Likewise Henschenius, t. v. Maij, p. 68.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 21 :*

**ST FELIX OF CANTALICIO.** Of poor parentage, he was, from his infancy, called "the saint"; he habituated himself to holy meditation as he laboured, and was favoured by God with extraordinary raptures: **ST GODRICK**, hermit: **ST HOSPITIUS**, commonly called Sospis, a recluse in Provence. He lived on bread and dates only, in an old tower, girded with an iron chain, and was gifted with prophecy and miracles.



MAY 22

## ST YVO, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1303)

[From the information taken for his canonization, twenty-seven years after his death, and from the bull itself. See Dom. Morice, *Hist. de la Bretagne*, t. i. ad an. 1303. Papebroke, ad 19 Maij, t. iv. p. 583. Lobineau, *Vies des Saints de la Bretagne*, p. 245.]

ST YVO HELORI, or son of Helor, descended from a noble and virtuous family near Treguier in Brittany, was born in 1253. He studied grammar at home with unusual application and success, and at fourteen years of age was sent to Paris where he learned the liberal arts and divinity; he applied himself to the civil and canon law at Orleans. His mother was wont frequently to say to him that he ought so to live as became a saint, to which his answer always was that he hoped to be one. This resolution took deep root in his soul, and the impression of this obligation was in his heart a continual spur to virtue and a check against the least shadow of any dangerous course. The contagious example of many loose companions at school served only to inspire him with the greater horror of evil and moved him to arm himself more vigorously against it. The gravity of his behaviour reclaimed many from their vicious courses. His time was chiefly divided betwixt study and prayer; and for his recreation he visited the hospitals, where he attended the sick with great charity and comforted them under the severe trials of their suffering condition. During his ten years' stay at Paris, whither he was sent at fourteen years of age, and where he went through a course of theology and canon law, he was the admiration of that university both for the quickness of his parts and his extraordinary piety. He continued the same manner of life at Orleans, where he studied the decretals under the celebrated William de Blaye, afterwards Bishop of Angouleme, and the institutions under Peter de la Chapelle, afterwards Bishop of Toulouse, and cardinal; but he increased his austerities and penance. He chastised his body with a hair shirt, always abstained from meat and wine, fasted all Lent and Advent and on many other days in the year on bread and water, and took his rest, which was always very short, lying on a mat of straw with a book or stone under his head for a pillow, and he never lay down till he was quite overpowered with sleep.

He made a private vow of perpetual chastity; but this not being known, many honourable matches were proposed to him which he modestly rejected as incompatible with his studious life. He long deliberated with himself whether to embrace a religious or a clerical state; but the desire of serving his neighbour determined him at length in favour of the latter. He desired, indeed, out of humility always to remain in the lesser orders; but his bishop compelled him to receive the priesthood, a step which cost him

many tears, though he qualified himself for that sacred dignity by the most perfect purity of mind and body and by a long and fervent preparation. Maurice, the Archdeacon of Rennes, who was formerly by his office perpetual vicar of the bishop, appointed him official or ecclesiastical judge for that diocese. St Yvo protected the orphans and widows, defended the poor, and administered justice to all with an impartiality, application, and tenderness which gained him the goodwill even of those who lost their causes. He never pronounced sentence without shedding many tears, always having before his eyes the tribunal of the sovereign Judge, where he himself was one day to appear and to stand silent at the bar.

Many bishops strove who should be so happy as to possess him: his own prelate, Alan Le Bruc, Bishop of Treguier, carried the point and obliged him to leave Rennes. The saint by his care soon changed the face of this diocese and reformed the clergy. The bad feared him, the good found in him a father, and the great ones respected him. Though himself a judge in quality of official, he solicited causes in favour of the poor in other courts, pleaded them himself at the bar, and visited and comforted the prisoners. He was surnamed the advocate and lawyer of the poor. Once, not being able to reconcile a mother and a son who pleaded violently against each other, he went and offered up mass for them and they immediately came to an agreement together. He never took a fee, but pleaded all causes without any gratuity. His bishop, Alan le Bruc, nominated him rector of Tresdretz, and eight years after his successor, Geoffrey Tournemine, of Lohanec, one of the most considerable parishes of the diocese, which he served ten years till his death. He always rose at midnight to matins and said every day mass with incredible devotion and fervour. In his preparation he continued long prostrate, quite absorbed in the consideration of the abyss of his own nothingness and of the awful majesty of him to whom he was going to offer sacrifice and the sanctity of the victim. He usually rose bathed in tears, which continued to flow abundantly during the whole time he was celebrating the divine mysteries. Upon accepting the first curacy he laid aside furs and every other ornament in dress which his former dignity obliged him to wear, and he ever after used the meanest and plainest ecclesiastical garments that could be worn. His fasts and austerities he rather increased than abated, fasting, as we observed already, Lent, Advent, and all vigils, and Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays every week, so severely as to allow himself no other refection than bread and water. On other days he only added to his meal a pottage of peas or other pulse or herbs, and on the principal festivals of the year a couple of eggs. Tears trickled from his eyes whenever he spoke on spiritual things, which were the usual subject of his discourse; and such was the energy of his words as pene-

trated the souls of his hearers. He preached often in distant churches besides his own, and sometimes thrice or five times on the same day. All differences were referred to him, and he took care to reconcile the parties. He built a house near his own for a hospital of the poor and sick; he washed their feet, cleansed their ulcers, served them at table, and ate himself only the scraps which they had left. He distributed his corn, or the price for which he sold it, among the poor immediately after the harvest. When a certain person endeavoured to persuade him to keep it some months that he might sell it at a better price, he answered, "I know not whether I shall be then alive to give it." Another time the same person said to him, "I have gained a fifth by keeping my corn." "But I," replied the saint, "a hundredfold by giving it immediately away." On a certain occasion when he had only one loaf in his house he ordered it to be given to the poor; but upon his vicar's complaint at this he gave him one half of it and divided the other half among the poor, reserving nothing for himself. Providence never failed him in his necessities. During the Lent in 1303 he perceived his strength daily to decay; yet far from abating anything in his austerities, he thought himself obliged to redouble his fervour in proportion as he advanced nearer to eternity. On the eve of the Ascension he preached to his people, said mass, being upheld by two persons, and gave advice to all who addressed themselves to him. After this he lay down on his bed, which was a hurdle of twigs pleated together, and received the last sacraments. From that moment he entertained himself with God alone till his soul went to possess him in his glory. His death happened on the 19th of May 1303, in the fiftieth year of his age. The greatest part of his relics are kept in the cathedral of Treguier. Charles of Blois, Duke of Brittany, placed a portion in the Church of our Lady at Lamballe, capital of his county (now the duchy) of Penthièvre. From another portion given to the Abbey of our Saviour, of the Cistercian Order, small distributions have been made to St Peter's at Louvain, to Mechlin, Gant, and other places. The Duke of Brittany, John of Montfort (competitor with Charles of Blois for that duchy, which after his death was carried by his valiant widow and enjoyed by his son), went to Rome to solicit his canonization, declared that under a distemper, being given over by physicians, he was restored to his health by imploring St Yvo's intercession. Many other miracles were proved before the commissaries of John XXII in 1330, and St Yvo was canonized by Clement VI in 1347. His festival is celebrated in the several dioceses in Brittany, and his name occurs in the Roman Martyrology on the 19th of May. The university of Nantes puts itself under the special protection of his patronage. The Bretons founded a collegiate church in his honour at Paris in 1348. The chapel of Kirmartin, where the saint lived, which was first dedicated under the

patronage of the Blessed Virgin, now bears his name: a church in Rome and several others in other places are built in his honour.

St Yvo was a saint amidst the dangers of the world; but he preserved his virtue untainted only by arming himself carefully against them, by conversing assiduously with God in prayer and holy meditation, and by most watchfully shunning the snares of bad company. Without this precaution all the instructions of parents and all other means of virtue are ineffectual; and a soul is sure to split against the rock which does not steer wide of it. God preserved Toby faithful amidst the Samaritan idolaters, and Lot in Sodom itself; but he will never protect those who voluntarily seek danger and court destruction. Who for pleasure or amusement would choose to live in a pest-house continually to converse with persons infected with the plague, and to breathe an empoisoned air? The maxims both of reason and religion command us to fly from out of the midst of Babylon, that is, from the company of abandoned sinners, whose very conversation and deportment secretly spread a baneful influence over our minds.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 22 :*

ST BASILISCUS, martyred with St Lucia in 312 : ST BOBO, a gentleman of Provence, a great soldier, the father of the poor and the defender of his country against the Saracens; he died while on a pilgrimage to Rome in 985 : ST CASTUS and ST ÆMILIUS, martyrs who had at first failed to stand true in the persecution but rose with great fervour and triumphed in the fire of their martyrdom; St Augustine preached a sermon on these two, likening them in their fall and their repentance to St Peter : BLESSED JOHN FOREST, O.S.F., martyr : ST CONALL, Abbot in Ireland, honoured in a large parish in the County Tyrconnel with great devotion; his church and well are visited by many pilgrims : ST RITA, widow : and St Yvo, Bishop, canonized only twenty-seven years after his death, in 1253.

## MAY 23

### ST JULIA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR

(FIFTH AGE)

[From her authentic acts given by Ruinart, in an appendix to his edition of the history of Victor Vitensis, de Persec. Vandal.]

SHE was a noble virgin at Carthage who, when that city was taken by Genseric in 439, was sold for a slave to a pagan merchant of Syria. Under the most mortifying employments of her station, by cheerfulness and patience she found, besides her sanctification, a present happiness and comfort which the world could not have afforded. All the time she was not employed in her master's business was devoted to prayer and reading books of piety. She fasted very rigorously every day but Sunday; nor could all the entreaties of her master, who was charmed with her fidelity and other virtues, nor the hardships of her situation, prevail with her to be more tender of herself. The merchant thought proper to carry her with him on one of his voyages to Gaul, where he imported the most

valuable commodities of the Levant. Having reached the northern part of Corsica, or that point now called Capo-Corso, he cast anchor and went on shore to join the pagans of the place in an idolatrous festival kept there at that time with the sacrifice of a bull. Julia was left at some distance because she would not be defiled by the superstitious ceremonies, which she openly reviled. Felix, the governor of the island, who was a bigoted pagan, asked the merchant who this woman was who dared to insult the gods. He informed him that she was a Christian, and that all his authority over her was too weak to prevail with her to renounce her religion; but that he found her so diligent and faithful he could not part with her. The governor offered him four of his best female slaves in exchange for her. But the merchant, whose name was Eusebius, replied, "No; all you are worth will not purchase her; for I would freely lose the most valuable thing I have in the world rather than be deprived of her." However, the governor, whilst Eusebius was drunk and asleep, took upon him to compel her to sacrifice to his gods. He proffered to procure her liberty if she would comply. The saint made answer that she was as free as she desired to be as long as she was allowed to serve Jesus Christ; and whatever should happen she would never purchase her liberty by so abominable a crime. Felix thinking himself derided by her undaunted and resolute air, in a transport of rage caused her to be struck on the face and the hair of her head to be torn off; and lastly, ordered her to be hanged on a cross till she expired. Certain monks of the isle of Gorgon (which is now called La Gorgona and lies between Corsica and Leghorn) carried off her body; but in 763 Desiderius, King of Lombardy, removed her relics to Brescia, where her memory is celebrated with great devotion.

St Julia, whether free or a slave, whether in prosperity or in adversity, was equally fervent and devout. She adored all the sweet designs of providence; and, far from complaining, she never ceased to praise and thank God under all his holy appointments, making them always the means of her virtue and sanctification. God, by an admirable chain of events, raised her by her fidelity to the honour of the saints and to the dignity of a virgin and martyr.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 23 :*

BLESSED ANDREW BOBOLA, martyr : ST DESIDERIUS, Bishop of Langres, who went out with his clergy to meet the attacking pagans and was martyred with his followers, to save his flock : another ST DESIDERIUS, Bishop of Vienne, also a martyr for his courage in reproving Queen Brunehaut for her infamies and cruelties. Returning home after his sermon on chastity, he was murdered in a village now called St Didier in 612 : ST JOHN BAPTIST DE ROSSI spent his life working among the poor and the suffering, and died in 1764 : and ST JULIA.

MAY 24

## ST VINCENT OF LERINS, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 450)

[See his *Commonitorium adversus Hæreticos*, with the English preface of Mr Reeves, t. ii. Also Ceillier and Orsi; and his *Justification and Life* in Papebroke, *Acts Sanctor.* t. v. p. 284.]

ST VINCENT was of Gaulish extraction, had a polite education, was afterwards for some time an officer in the army, and lived with dignity in the world. He informs us in his Prologue that, having been some time tossed about in the storms of a bustling military life, he began seriously to consider the dangers with which he was surrounded and the vanity and folly of his pursuits. He desired to take shelter in the harbour of religion, which he calls the safest refuge in the world.<sup>1</sup> His view in this resolution was that he might strenuously labour to divest his soul of its ruffling passions, of pride and vanity, and to offer to God the acceptable sacrifice of a humble and Christian spirit; and that, being further removed from worldly temptations, he might endeavour more easily to avoid not only the wrecks of the present life, but also the burnings of that which is to come. In these dispositions he retired from the crowds of cities and made for the desired haven with all the sail he could. The place he chose for his retirement was in a small remote island sheltered from the noise of the world. This Gennadius assures us to have been the famous monastery of Lerins, situated in the lesser of the two agreeable green islands which formerly bore the name of Lerins, not far from the coast of Lower Provence towards Antibes. In this place he shut himself up that he might attend solely to what God commands us and study to know him. He considered that true faith is necessary to salvation no less than morality, and that the former is the foundation of Christian virtue; and he grieved to see the church at that time pestered with numberless heresies which sucked their poison from their very antidote, the Holy Scriptures, and which by various wiles spread on every side their dangerous snares. To guard the faithful against the false and perplexing glosses of modern subtle refiners, and to open the eyes of those who had been already seduced by them, he, with great clearness, eloquence, and force of reasoning writ a book which he entitled *A Commonitory against Heretics*, which he composed in 434, three years after the general council of Ephesus had condemned the Nestorians. He had chiefly in view the heretics of his own times, especially the Nestorians and Apollinarists, but he confuted them by general clear principles which overturn all heresies to the end of the world. Together with the ornaments of eloquence and erudition, the inward beauty of his mind and the brightness of his devotion sparkle in every page of his book.

<sup>1</sup> In portum religionis cunctis semper fidissimum. Prolog. Commonit.

Out of humility he disguises himself under the name of Peregrinus, to express the quality of being a pilgrim or stranger on earth, and one by his monastic state in a more particular manner estranged from the world. He styles himself "The least of all the servants of God, and less than the least of all the saints," unworthy to bear the holy name of a Christian. He layeth down this rule or fundamental principle in which he found, by a diligent inquiry, all Catholic pastors and the ancient fathers to agree, that such doctrine is truly Catholic as hath been believed "in all places, at all times, and by all the faithful."<sup>1</sup> By this test of universality, antiquity, and consent, he saith, all controverted points in belief must be tried. He showeth that whilst Novatian, Photinus, Sabellius, Donatus, Arius, Eunomius, Jovinian, Pelagius, Celestius, and Nestorius expound the divine oracles different ways, to avoid the perplexity of errors we must interpret the Holy Scriptures by the tradition of the Catholic Church as the clue to conduct us in the truth. For this tradition, derived from the apostles, manifesteth the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and all novelty in faith is a certain mark of heresy; and in religion nothing is more to be dreaded than itching ears after new teachers. He saith, "They who have made bold with one article of faith will proceed on to others; and what will be the consequence of this reforming of religion but only that these refiners will never have done till they have reformed it quite away."<sup>2</sup> He elegantly expatiates on the divine charge given to the church to maintain inviolable the sacred depositum of faith.<sup>3</sup> He takes notice that heretics quote the sacred writings at every word, and that in the works of Paulus Somosatenus, Priscillian, Eunomius, Jovinian, and other like pests of Christendom, almost every page is painted and laid on thick with scripture texts, which Tertullian also remarks. But in this, saith St Vincent, heretics are like those poisoners or quacks who put off their destructive potions under inscriptions of good drugs and under the title of infallible cures.<sup>4</sup> They imitate the father of lies, who quoted scripture against the Son of God when he tempted him.<sup>5</sup> The saint adds, that if a doubt arise in interpreting the meaning of the scriptures in any point of faith, we must summon in the holy fathers who have lived and died in the faith and communion of the Catholic Church, and by this test we shall prove the false doctrine to be novel. St Vincent died in the reigns of Theodosius II and Valentinian III, consequently before the close of the year 450. His relics are preserved with respect at Lerins, and his name occurs in the Roman Martyrology.

St Vincent observes<sup>6</sup> that souls which have lost the anchorage of the catholic faith are "tossed and shattered with inward storms of clashing thoughts, that by this restless posture of mind they may be made sensible

<sup>1</sup> Comm. C. 3.<sup>2</sup> C. 29.<sup>3</sup> C. 27, et 30.<sup>4</sup> C. 31.<sup>5</sup> C. 32.<sup>6</sup> C. 25.

of their danger; and taking down the sails of pride and vanity which they have unhappily spread before every gust of heresy, they may make all the sail they can into the safe and peaceful harbour of their holy mother the Catholic Church; and being sick from a surfeit of errors may there discharge those foul and bitter waters to make room for the pure waters of life. There they may unlearn well what they have learned ill; may get a right notion of all those doctrines of the church they are capable of understanding, and believe those that surpass all understanding."

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 24 :*

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS (in the Dioceses of England) : ST DONATIAN and ST ROGATIAN, martyrs; these were two noblemen, brothers, Donatian being first baptized and Rogatian baptized in his blood by following the example of his brother in refusing to sacrifice to Jupiter and Apollo : ST JOHN DE PRADO, having embraced the Order of Barefooted Observatin Franciscans, was sent to preach the gospel in Morocco, imprisoned, scourged, and finally burnt. "He suffered with constancy and joy" : ST MARY MAGDALEN POSTEL, virgin: and ST VINCENT OF LERINS.

#### MAY 25

### ST GREGORY VII, POPE, CONFESSOR

BEFORE his exaltation to the popedom he was called Hildebrand. He was born in Tuscany and educated at Rome under his uncle, the Abbot of Our Lady's upon the Aventin hill. He went afterwards into France and embraced the monastic state at Cluni. Being called back to Rome, he signalized himself by his zeal, sanctity, and learning, and preached with great reputation and fruit in the court of the pious Emperor Henry III, surnamed the Black. The holy Pope St Leo IX had the highest esteem for him, often followed his counsels, ordained him subdeacon, and made him Abbot of St Paul's, which church then belonged to a very small community of monks and lay at that time almost in ruins, the greatest part of its revenues being usurped by powerful laymen. Hildebrand recovered its lands and restored the monastery to its ancient splendour. In 1054 he was sent by Pope Victor II legate into France, in order to abolish the practice of simony in the collation of ecclesiastical benefices. He held for this purpose a council at Lyons, in which a certain bishop who was accused of simony denied the crime with which he was charged. The legate bade him recite the "Glory be to the Father," which the bishop readily endeavoured to do. But he was never able to pronounce the name of the Holy Ghost. At this miraculous conviction he was struck with remorse and confusion and, casting himself at the legate's feet, humbly confessed his crime. This is related by Pope Calixtus II, St Hugh of Cluni, William of Malmesbury, and St Peter Damian,<sup>1</sup> and the last-mentioned author assures us that he had the account from Hildebrand's

<sup>1</sup> Opusc. xix. c. 6.



own mouth. The legate presided also in the council of Tours in which Berengarius retracted and condemned the heresy which he had broached relating to the holy eucharist.<sup>1</sup> Pope Stephen IX sent him on an embassy to the empress, and dying, ordered his return to be waited for and his advice to be followed in the election of a new pope. By his direction Nicholas II, and after his death in 1061, Alexander II, were placed in St Peter's chair. This latter dying in 1073, Hildebrand, then archdeacon, was by compulsion exalted to the papacy. He left nothing unattempted to keep off that heavy burden from his shoulders, and among other expedients wrote to Henry IV, King of Germany, who was then in Bavaria, entreating him to interpose his authority in order to prevail that the project of his election might be set aside, declaring at the same time that if he were pope he could never tolerate his enormous and scandalous crimes. Notwithstanding this, Henry gave his assent to the saint's election, and he was consecrated Pope on St Peter's day. In his letters he was not able to forbear expressing his most sensible grief, and he with tears implored the succour of the prayers of the whole church for grace and fortitude that he might be enabled worthily to discharge his functions. Before his ordination he wrote to the pious countesses, Beatrice and Mathilda, advising them not to communicate with those bishops of Lombardy who had been convicted of simony, though King Henry espoused their interest; and he intimated to them a design of sending to that prince some pious persons who should give him wholesome advice and exhort him to return to his duty.<sup>2</sup> The scandals which simony caused in the church called for an apostolic zeal in the chief pastor to stem the torrent which was breaking into the sanctuary itself. The pope deposed Godfrey, Archbishop of Milan, who had obtained that dignity by simony, and in a council which he held at Rome enacted a law by which all persons that should be guilty of that sin were declared incapable of receiving any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and disqualified for holding any benefice whatever. This decree raised great murmurs in Germany, and the Archbishop of Mentz was in danger of being murdered for labouring to put it in execution. Notwithstanding this opposition, the pope judged that the more obstinate the evil was the greater was the necessity of a severe remedy, and he stirred up all zealous pastors rather to lay down their lives than to be remiss in maintaining the laws of God and his Church. He excommunicated Cencius, a rich and powerful nobleman of Rome, and some other persons for certain notorious crimes. These sinners being incorrigible, grew desperate and laid violent hands on the pope on Christmas night in 1075. In committing this outrage, one of them, attempting to strike off his head, gave him a deep wound, and the mutineers carried him to Cencius's castle. But the

<sup>1</sup> Anonym. Chiffet. de multiplici damnat. Berengarius, et Pagi ad ann. 1055, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> St. Greg. c. x. Ep. 11.

people rescued him the next day and banished the conspirators. The pope himself recalled and pardoned them, by which mildness he overcame their malice. This storm was not over when he was overtaken by another, far more boisterous, from a different quarter. Henry IV, King of Germany, who succeeded his pious father Henry III, surnamed the Black, in 1056, when he was only ten years old, governed well so long as he followed the counsels of his mother Agnes and became a good soldier. But having taken the reins into his own hands he, by several acts of tyranny, alienated first the princes of the empire and afterwards began grievously to oppress the church. He crushed a powerful rebellion of the Saxons in 1063; but in 1064 the dukes of Suabia, Carinthia, and Bavaria taking up arms gave him great disturbance, alleging that he had usurped several provinces to which he had no right, and that he had oppressed the liberty of the empire. When Gregory VII was raised to the papacy, Henry wrote first to his holiness in the style of a humble penitent, condemning himself for having simoniacally sold the benefices of the church, usurped a pretended right of giving the investitures of bishoprics, and grievously abused it in often promoting to ecclesiastical dignities persons most unworthy and unfit. The pope, on his side, had shown an extreme concern for his salvation, had caressed him and sent him many obliging and tender letters, though always breathing an apostolic zeal. Henry showed by his actions that his pretended repentance was mere hypocrisy, for he continued to repeat the same crimes; and perceiving the inflexible disposition of his holiness, assembled at Worms on the 23rd of January 1076 a conventicle of simoniacal time-serving bishops, who presumed to depose him from the pontificate on pretence of an imaginary nullity in his election. The king sent this mock sentence to the pope at Rome, together with a contumelious letter. Gregory, in a council at Rome, declared the king and his schismatical adherents excommunicated, and took upon him to pronounce that for his tyranny he had forfeited his crown, which he again confirmed in 1080. Many princes of the empire chose Rodolph, Duke of Suabia, emperor in 1077; but that prince proved unfortunate in several battles and died of the wounds which he received in one of them. Henry on his side set up Guibert, the excommunicated Archbishop of Ravenna, for antipope; and in 1084 entered Rome with an army and besieged St Gregory in the castle St Angelo, but was obliged by Robert Guiscard the Norman, Duke of Calabria, to retire, and the Tuscans gave his army a great overthrow in Lombardy. Three devout princesses were at that time the most strenuous protectresses of the Holy See, namely Agnes, the empress dowager, who after being removed from the regency during her son's minority by a faction of princes, retired to Rome in 1062, and there died a nun in 1077. The other two were Maud or Mathilda, the most pious Countess of Tuscany, and Beatrice her mother. They were admirers and

faithful imitatrices of the virtues of the pope, and were directed by his counsels in the paths of perfection. Amidst these storms St Gregory enjoyed a perfect tranquillity of soul, having his heart strongly fixed on God and adoring in all things his ever holy will. He received all afflictions cheerfully, knowing them to be the greatest remedy and advancement in the interior man if the exterior be humbled and beaten by many strokes. The author of the life of St Anselm of Lucca assures us that his heart seemed perfectly disengaged from all earthly things, and that he attained to so eminent a gift of contemplation that in the midst of the most distracting affairs he appeared always recollected and often fell into raptures. Duke Robert, having rescued him from his enemies, conducted him for greater safety from Rome to Monte Cassino, and thence to Salerno, where God was pleased to put an end to his labours; for the saint falling sick in that city, he recommended for his successor Cardinal Desiderius, Abbot of Monte Cassino; and having received the last sacraments in perfect dispositions of resignation and piety, happily exchanged this mortal life for immortality on the 25th of May 1085, in the twelfth year of his pontificate. Several contemporary writers bear testimony to many miracles performed by him or through his intercession after his death. See St Gregory's epistles and his exact life in the Bolland. t. xvii. p. 113, and Mabillon, sec. 6, Ben. Also Lambert of Aschafnaburg, William of Malmesbury, Platina, Bzovius, &c. See Janning, the Bollandist, Junij, t. vi. p. 167; Papebroke, t. vi. Maij, p. 70, and Benedict XIV's Apology for St Gregory VII, lib. 1, de Canoniz. Sanctor. c. 41, t. i.; Nat. Alex. sæc. xi. art. 11, and dissert. 2, art. 6, 7; Muratori, Annali d'Italia, t. xii. and xiii.; the Life of St Gregory VII, by Pandulphus of Pisa, in Muratori, Scriptor. Ital. t. iii. p. 304; also by Paulus Bernriedensis of the same age, with the remarks of Muratori, ib. p. 314.

It may not be amiss to add what Du Pin, a most partial adversary, writes concerning him when he draws his character: "It must be acknowledged," says he, "that Pope Gregory VII was an extraordinary genius, capable of great things; constant and undaunted in the execution; well versed in the constitution of his predecessors; zealous for the interests of the holy see; an enemy to simony and libertinism (vices which he vigorously opposed); full of Christian thoughts and of zeal for the reformation of the manners of the clergy; and there is not the least colour to think that he was not unblemished in his own morals. This is the judgment which we suppose everyone will pass upon him who shall read over his letters with a disinterested and unprejudiced mind. They are penned with a good deal of eloquence, full of great matter, and embellished with noble and pious thoughts; and we boldly say that no pope since

Gregory I wrote such strong and fine letters as this Gregory did." Du Pin, Cent. 11, c. 1, pp. 67, 68.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 25 :*

St ALDHELM, Bishop, born among the West Saxons, educated by St Adrian at Canterbury, and took the monastic habit under an Irish monk in a poor monastery at Malmesbury ; later, as Bishop of Sherburne, a worthy successor to the apostles ; his festival is kept in certain dioceses in England on 29th May : St GREGORY VII, Pope (called Hildebrand) : St DUMHADE OF IRELAND, Abbot, who being made Abbot of St Columkille's great monastery, introduced the Roman way of celebrating Easter : St MADELEINE SOPHIE BARAT, virgin : St MARY MAGDALEN OF PAZZI, devoted to prayer and penance from her childhood, she became a Carmelite nun in 1582 : St MAXIMUS and St VENERAND, martyrs, said to have been brothers, natives of Brescia, martyred in Normandy : and St URBAN, Pope and martyr.

## MAY 26

### ST AUGUSTINE, BISHOP, CONFESSOR, APOSTLE OF THE ENGLISH

(A.D. 604)

[From Bede, b. 1, c. 23, &c., and the Letters and Life of St Gregory.]

THE Saxons, English, and Jutes, pagan Germans, who in this island began in 454 to expel the old Britons into the mountainous part of the country, had reigned here about one hundred and fifty years when God was pleased to open their eyes to the light of the gospel. St Gregory the Great, before his pontificate, had desired to become himself their apostle; but was hindered by the people of Rome, who would by no means suffer him to leave that city. This undertaking, however, he had very much at heart, and never ceased to recommend to God the souls of this infidel nation. When he was placed in the apostolic chair he immediately turned his thoughts towards this abandoned part of the vineyard, and resolved to send thither a select number of zealous labourers. For this great work none seemed better qualified than Augustine, then Prior of St Gregory's monastery, dedicated to St Andrew in Rome. Him, therefore, the pope appointed superior of this mission, allotting him several assistants who were Roman monks. The powers of hell trembled at the sight of this little troop, which marched against them armed only with the cross, by which they had been stripped of their empire over men. Zeal and obedience gave these saints courage, and they set out with joy upon an expedition of which the prize was to be either the conquest of a new nation to Christ or the crown of martyrdom for themselves. But the devils found means to throw a stumbling-block in their way. St Gregory had recommended them to several French bishops on their road, of whom they were to learn the circumstances of their undertaking and prepare themselves accordingly. But when the missionaries were advanced several days' journey, probably as far as Aix in Provence, certain persons, with many of those to whom they were addressed, exaggerated to them the

ferocity of the English people, the difference of manners, the difficulty of the language, the dangers of the sea, and other such obstacles in such a manner that they deliberated whether it was prudent to proceed; the result of which consultation was that Augustine should be deputed back to St Gregory to lay before him these difficulties and to beg leave for them to return to Rome. The pope, well apprized of the artifices of the devil, saw in these retardments themselves greater motives of confidence in God; for where the enemy is most active and obstacles seem greatest in the divine service, there we have reason to conclude that the work is of the greater importance and that the success will be the more glorious. Souls are never prepared for an eminent virtue and the brightest crowns but by passing through great trials. This, though often immediately owing to the malice of the devil, is permitted by God and is an effect of his all-wise providence to raise the fervour of his servants for the exceeding increase of their virtue. St Gregory, therefore, sent Augustine back with a letter of encouragement to the rest of the missionaries, representing to them the cowardice of abandoning a good work when it is begun; exhorting them not to listen to evil suggestions of railing men, and expressing his desire of the happiness of bearing them company and sharing in their labours had it been possible. The temptation being removed, the apostolic labourers pursued their journey with great alacrity and, taking some Frenchmen for interpreters along with them, landed in the Isle of Thanet, on the east side of Kent, in the year 596, being, with their interpreters, near forty persons. From this place St Augustine sent to Ethelbert, the powerful King of Kent, signifying that he was come from Rome and brought him a most happy message with an assured divine promise of a kingdom which would never have an end. The king ordered them to remain in that island, where he took care they should be furnished with all necessaries whilst he deliberated what to do. This great prince held in subjection all the other English kings who commanded on this side the Humber; nor was he a stranger to the Christian religion, for his queen, Bertha, a daughter of Caribert, King of Paris, was a Christian, and had with her Luidhard, Bishop of Senlis, for her director and almoner. After some days the king went in person to the isle, but sat in the open air to admit Augustine to his presence; for he had a superstitious notion that if he came with any magical spell, this would have an effect upon him under the cover of a house, but could have none in the open fields. The religious men came to him in procession, "carrying for their banner a silver cross and an image of our Saviour painted on a board; and singing the litany as they walked, made humble prayer for themselves and for the souls of those to whom they came." Being admitted into the presence of the king, they announced to him the word of life. His majesty listened attentively; but answered that their words and promises

indeed were fair, but new, and to him uncertain. However, that since they were come a great way for his sake, they should not be molested nor hindered from preaching to his subjects. He also appointed them necessary subsistence and a dwelling-place in Canterbury, the capital city of his dominions. They came thither in procession, singing, and imitated the lives of the apostles, serving God in prayer, watching, and fasting; despising the things of this world as persons who belonged to another, and ready to suffer or die for the faith which they preached. There stood near the city an old church of St Martin left by the Britons. In this was the queen accustomed to perform her devotions, and in it the apostolic preachers began to meet, sing, say mass, preach, and baptize till, the king being converted, they had licence to repair and build churches everywhere. Several among the people were converted and received the holy sacrament of regeneration; and in a short time the king himself, whose conversion was followed by innumerable others.

Bede says that St Augustine after this went back to Arles to Etherius, bishop of that city, from whose hands he received the episcopal consecration; but for Etherius we must read Virgilius, who was at that time Archbishop of Arles, Etherius being Bishop of Lyons. The reason why he went so far seems to have been because the Archbishop of Arles was not only primate, but apostolic legate in Gaul; and Augustine probably wanted his advice in many things. The saint had baptized the king and was himself ordained bishop before October 597, within the space of one year; for the letter of St Gregory to encourage the missionaries in France to proceed was dated on the 10th of August 596. In 598 the same pope wrote to Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria, that Augustine had been ordained bishop, with his licence, by the German prelates; so he calls the French because they came from Germany. He adds, "In the last solemnity of our Lord's nativity, more than ten thousand of the English nation were baptized by this our brother and fellow-bishop."

St Augustine, immediately after his return into Britain, sent Laurence and Peter to Rome to solicit a supply of more labourers, and they brought over several excellent disciples of Pope Gregory; among whom were Mellitus, the first bishop of London, Justus, the first bishop of Rochester, Paulinus, the first archbishop of York, and Rufinianus, the third abbot of Augustine's. "With this colony of new missionaries, the holy pope sent all things in general for the divine worship and the service of the church, viz.: sacred vessels, altar-cloths, ornaments for churches, and vestments for priests and clerks, relics of the holy apostles and martyrs, and many books," as Bede writes.<sup>1</sup> St Augustine wrote frequently to St Gregory, whom he consulted in the least difficulties which occurred in his ministry, which shows the tenderness of his conscience; for in

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Hist. b. i. c. 29.*

many things which he might have decided by his own learning and prudence, he desired to render his conscience more secure by the advice and decision of his chief pastor. The same pope wrote to the Abbot Mellitus,<sup>1</sup> directing the idols to be destroyed and their temples to be changed into Christian churches by purifying and sprinkling them with holy water, and erecting altars and placing relics in them; thus employing the spoils of Egypt to the service of the living God. He permits the celebration of wakes on the anniversary feasts of the dedication of the churches and on the solemnities of the martyrs, to be encouraged among the people, the more easily to withdraw them from their heathenish riotous festivals.

The good King Ethelbert laboured himself in promoting the conversion of his subjects during the twenty remaining years of his life; he enacted wholesome laws, abolished idols, and shut up their temples throughout his dominions. He thought he had gained a kingdom when he saw one of his subjects embrace the faith, and looked upon himself as king only that he might make the King of kings be served by others. He built Christchurch, the cathedral in Canterbury, upon the same spot where had formerly stood a heathenish temple. He also founded the Abbey of SS. Peter and Paul without the walls of that city, since called St Augustine's, the Church of St Andrew in Rochester, &c. He brought over to the faith Sebert, the pious King of the East Saxons, and Redwald, King of the East Angles, though the latter, Samaritan-like, worshipped Christ with his idols. Ethelbert reigned fifty-six years and departed to our Lord in 616. He was buried in the Abbey-church of SS. Peter and Paul, which himself had founded. He had been baptized in the Church of St Pancras, which St Augustine had dedicated and which had been a pagan temple, on that very spot where he built soon after Christchurch, as is mentioned in an old manuscript preserved in the library of Trinity Hall, in Cambridge, quoted by Spelman<sup>2</sup> and Tyrrel. St Ethelbert is commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on the 24th of February.

St Gregory, in the year 600, sent, with many noble presents, a letter of congratulation and excellent advice to King Ethelbert. He in the same year sent to St Augustine the archiepiscopal pall, with authority to ordain twelve bishops who should be subject to his metropolitan see; ordering that when the northern English should have embraced the faith, he should ordain a bishop of York who should likewise be a metropolitan with twelve suffragan bishops. But particular circumstances afterwards required some alterations in the execution of this order. The fame of many miracles wrought by St Augustine in the conversion of the English having reached Rome, St Gregory wrote to him,<sup>3</sup> exhorting him to beware of the temptations of pride or vainglory in the great miracles and heavenly

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Hist. b. i. c. 30.*

<sup>2</sup> Conc. Brit. t. i.

<sup>3</sup> Bede, *b. i. c. 31.*

gifts which God showed in the nation which he had chosen. "Wherefore," says he, "amidst those things which you exteriorly perform, always interiorly judge yourself and thoroughly understand both what you are yourself, and how great a grace is given in that nation for the conversion of which you have even received the gift of working miracles. And if you remember that you have ever at any time offended your Creator either by word or deed, always have that before your eyes to the end that the remembrance of your guilt may crush the vanity rising in your heart. And whatever you shall receive or have received in relation to the working of miracles, esteem the same not as conferred on you but on those for whose salvation it hath been given you." He observes to him that when the disciples returned with joy and said to our Lord, "In thy name be the devils subject unto us," they presently received a rebuke; rejoice not in this, but "rather that your names are written in heaven."

St Augustine ordained St Mellitus Bishop of the East Saxons in London, and St Justus Bishop of Rochester; and, seeing the faith now spread wide on every side, he took upon him, by virtue of his metropolitan and legatine authority, which the pope had conferred upon him over all the bishops of Britain, to make a general visitation of his province. He desired very much to see the ancient Britons, whom the English had driven into the mountains of Wales, reclaimed from certain abuses which had crept in among them and to engage them to assist him in his labours in converting the English. But malice and an implacable hatred against that nation blinded their understandings and hardened their hearts. However, being on the confines of the Wiccians and West-Saxons, that is, on the edge of Worcestershire not far from Wales, he invited the British bishops and doctors to a conference. They met him at a place which was called at the time when Bede wrote Augustine's Oak. The zealous apostle employed both entreaties and exhortations and required of them three things: First, that they should assist him in preaching the gospel to the pagan English; secondly, that they should observe Easter at the due time; and, thirdly, that they should agree with the universal church in the manner of administering baptism. But they obstinately refused to comply with his desires. Whereupon St Augustine proposed by a divine impulse that a sick or impotent person should be brought in, and that their tradition should be followed as agreeable to God, by whose prayer he should be cured. The condition was accepted, though very unwillingly; and a blind man was brought and presented first to the British priests, but found no benefit by their prayers or other endeavours. Then Augustine bowed his knees to God, praying that by restoring the sight to this blind man he would make his spiritual light shine on the souls of many. Upon which the blind man immediately recovered his sight and the Britons confessed that they believed that the doctrine which



Augustine preached was the truth; but said that without the general consent of their nation they could not quit their ancient rites and customs. Wherefore they desired that a general synod of their country should be held. Accordingly a second more numerous council was assembled in which appeared several British bishops (their annals say seven) and many learned men, especially from the monastery of Bangor, which stood in Flintshire not far from the river Dee; not in the city of Bangor in Carnarvonshire. A little before they came they sent to consult a famous hermit among them, whether they should receive Augustine or reject his admonitions and retain their ancient usages. He bade them so to contrive it that Augustine and his company should come first to the place of the synod, and said that if he should arise when they approached they should look upon him as humble, and should hear and obey him; but if he should not rise to them that were more in number, then they should despise him. They took this ignorant and blind direction, and instead of weighing the justice and equity of the archbishop's demands, his right, and the truth of his doctrine, committed this important decision to a trifling casual circumstance or punctilio. They had before confessed that he taught the truth, and he had convinced them, both by reasons and a miracle, that he only required of them what charity and obedience to the church in points of discipline obliged them to; nevertheless, revenge and malice against the English made them still stand out and have recourse to the most idle pretence. Strong endeavours to do wrong God usually punishes with success. It so happened that when they entered the place of the synod, Augustine did not rise from his seat; whether this was done by inadvertence or because it might be the custom of the countries where he had been not to use those compliments in public places, at least in synods, any more than churches. But whatever was the occasion, nothing could be more unreasonable than the conclusion which the Britons drew from this circumstance. Had the inference been just the archbishop did not lose his right, nor was his doctrine the less true. His humility and charity were otherwise conspicuous. He was come so far for their sake, and out of humility was accustomed to travel on foot. Nor did he in this conference mention his own dignity or authority; he seems even to have waved the point of his primacy; which from his charity we cannot doubt but he would have been glad to have procured leave to resign to their own Archbishop of St David's had the Britons been willing on such terms to have conformed to the discipline of the universal church and lay aside their rancour against the English. However, upon this ridiculous pretence did that nation remain obstinate in their malice, which St Augustine seeing, he foretold them that "if they would not preach to the English the way of life, they would fall by their hands under the judgment of death." This prediction was not fulfilled till after the death

of St Augustine, as Bede expressly testifies,<sup>1</sup> when Ethilfrid, King of the northern English, who were yet pagans, gave the Britons a terrible overthrow near Caer-legion or Chester, and seeing the monks of Bangor praying at a distance, he cried out after the victory: "If they pray against us, they fight against us by their hostile imprecations." And rushing upon them with his army he slew twelve hundred of them or, according to Florence of Worcester, two thousand two hundred. For so numerous was this monastery that, being divided into seven companies, under so many superiors, each division consisted of at least three hundred monks, and whilst some were at work others were at prayer. Their obstinate refusal of the essential obligation of charity towards the English was a grievous crime and drew upon them this chastisement; but we hope the sin extended no further than to some of the superiors. This massacre was predicted by St Augustine as a divine punishment; but those who accuse him as an instigator of it are strangers to the spirit and bowels of most tender charity which the saint bore towards all the world, who knew no other arms against impenitent sinners and persecutors than those of compassion and tears and prayers for their conversion. And long before the accomplishment of this threat and prophecy in 607, St Augustine was translated to glory, as appears from several circumstances related by Bede himself, though the year of his death is not expressed by that historian, nor in his epitaph, which seems composed before the custom of counting dates by the era of Christ was introduced in this island, though it began to be used at Rome by Dionysius Exiguus, an abbot, in 550.

St Augustine, whilst yet living, ordained Laurence his successor in the see of Canterbury, not to leave at his death an infant church destitute of a pastor. He died on the 26th of May—and, as William Thorn says, from a very ancient book of his life, in the same year with St Gregory, viz. 604, which Mr Wharton proves from several other authorities.<sup>2</sup> Joscelyn, a monk of Canterbury, in 1096, besides two lives of St Augustine, compiled a book of his miracles wrought since his death and a history of the translation of his relics in 1091, which was accompanied with several miracles to which this author was an eyewitness. This work is given at length by Papebroke on this day. The second Council of Cloveshoe (that is, Cliffe) in Kent in 747, under Archbishop Cuthbert, Ethelbald, King of Mercia, being present, commanded<sup>3</sup> his festival to be kept a holiday by all the clergy and religious, and the name of St Augustine to be recited in the Litany immediately after that of St Gregory.

The body of St Augustine was deposited abroad till the Church of SS. Peter and Paul, near the walls of Canterbury, which King Ethelbert built for the burying-place of the kings and archbishops, was finished, when it was laid in the porch with this epitaph, which is preserved by

<sup>1</sup> Hist. lib. ii. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Anglia Sacra, t. i. p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Wilkins, Concil. Britan. t. i. p. 97.

Camden in his *Remains*,<sup>1</sup> and by Weever in his *Funeral Monuments*:<sup>2</sup> "Here rests Lord Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, who being sent hither by the blessed Gregory, Bishop of Rome, and by God upheld by the working of miracles,<sup>3</sup> brought King Ethelbert and his nation from idolatry to the faith of Christ; and having completed the days of his office in peace, died on the seventh day before the calends of June, in the reign of the same king." In the same porch were interred also the six succeeding archbishops—Laurence, Mellitus, Justus, Honorius, Deusdedit, and Theodorus. These in their epitaph are called the seven patriarchs of England. The porch being by that time full, and the custom beginning to allow persons of eminent dignity and sanctity to be buried within churches, St Brithwald, the eighth archbishop, was interred in the church of this abbey in 731, and near him his successor, St Tatwin. Weever says, besides the first archbishops and the kings of Kent, thousands of others were here interred; but by the demolition of this monastery "not one bone at this time remains near another, nor one stone almost on another, the tract of this most goodly foundation nowhere appearing." One side of the walls of King Ethelbert's Tower, the gates, houses, and some ruins of the outbuildings are still standing; but the site of the abbey cannot be traced, and the ground is a cherry orchard. This was the great abbey which some time after changed the name of SS. Peter and Paul for that of St Augustine's. But the remains of our saint were afterwards removed hence into the north porch of the Cathedral of Christchurch within the city; and on the 6th of September 1091, leaving in that place some part of the ashes and lesser bones, Abbot Wido translated the remainder into the church, where they lay for some time in a strong urn in the wall under the east window. In 1221 the head was put into a rich shrine ornamented with gold and precious stones; the rest of the bones lay in a marble tomb enriched with fine carvings and engravings till the dissolution.

Cuthbert, the eleventh archbishop, was the first person buried in Christchurch, in 759, since which time it had been the usual burying-place of the archbishops till the change of religion; for none of the Protestant archbishops have hitherto been there interred. In the Cathedral of Christchurch were the shrines of St Thomas, St Wilfride (whose relics were translated from Ripon by Odo), St Dunstan, St Elphege, St Anselm, St Odo, St Blaise, bishop, St Owen, Archbishop of Rouen, St Salvius, bishop, St Woolgam, St Swithun, &c. Battely<sup>4</sup> and Dr Brown Willis<sup>5</sup> justify the monks of Christchurch from the crimes laid to their charge at the dissolution, but say the riches of their church were their crime. Also the ingenious Mr Wharton, under the name of Antony Harmer, in his *Specimen of Errors in Bishop Burnet's History of the Reformation*,

<sup>1</sup> Camden's *Remains*, p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> *A Deo operatione miraculorum suffultus.*

<sup>3</sup> T. i. p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, p. 244.

<sup>5</sup> *Antiquities of Canterbury.*

p. 48, takes notice that whereas the monks of Christchurch in Canterbury and those of Battel Abbey were principally charged with enormous irregularities at the dissolution of abbeys, their innocence in both places, especially the former, is notorious from several evident circumstances. Christchurch at Canterbury was rated at the dissolution at two thousand three hundred and eighty-seven pounds per annum; St Augustine's, in the same place, at one thousand four hundred and thirteen pounds according to Dugdale.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 26 :*

ST AUGUSTINE, the Apostle of England : ST ELUTHARIUS, Pope (176), a Greek by birth, martyred in the later half of the second century : ST FRANCIS GERONIMO, S.J. : THE BLESSED MARTYRS OF UGANDA : ST PHILIP NERI, son of a lawyer, born in Florence, 1515; he served the sick in hospitals, comforting and consoling them; once ordained, he never wearied of hearing confessions, drawing many souls from sin to embrace a life of virtue; founder of the Oratorians : ST QUADRATUS, Bishop of Athens, a disciple of the Apostles : ST ODUVALD, Abbot, a Scottish nobleman who entered the Abbey of Melrose, where he continually advanced in fervour, having "the gift of tears and the habit of constant prayer"; he died ten years after St Cuthbert.

#### MAY 27

### ST BEDE, CONFESSOR, FATHER OF THE CHURCH

(A.D. 735)

[From the short account he has given of himself in the last chapter of his Ecclesiastical History; his disciple Cuthbert's relation of his death; his two short anonymous lives extant, one in Capgrave, the other quoted by F. Maihew. Also from Simeon of Durham, Hist. Dunelm. c. 14, 15, et l. de Pontif Eborac. in manuscript; Cotton. Malmesb. de Reg. Angl. lib. ii. c. 4; Matt. of West. ad an. 734. See Mabillon, sac. 3; Ben. p. 1, p. 539; Bulteau, t. ii. p. 316; Cave, Hist. Lit. t. i. ed. noviss; Ceillier, t. xviii. p. 1; Tanner, Bibl. Script. Brit. p. 86; Biographia Brit. t. i. Venerable Bede; and Smith in Appendix after Bede's Ecclesiastical History, p. 791.]

THE celebrated Dom. Mabillon,<sup>1</sup> mentioning Bede as a most illustrious instance of learning in the monastic institute, says: "Who ever applied himself to the study of every branch of literature and also to the teaching of others more than Bede? yet who was more closely united to heaven by the exercises of piety and religion? To see him pray, says an ancient writer, one would have thought he left himself no time to study; and when we look at his books we admire he could have found time to do anything else but writé." Camden calls him "the singular and shining light," and Leland, "the chiefest and brightest ornament of the English nation, most worthy, if anyone ever was, of immortal fame." William of Malmesbury tells us that it is easier to admire him in thought than to do him justice in expression.

Venerable Bede, called by the ancients Bedan (who is not to be confounded with a monk of Lindisfarne of the same name<sup>2</sup> but older), was born in 673, as Mabillon demonstrates from his own writings, in a village which soon after his birth became part of the estate of the new Monastery

<sup>1</sup> Tr. des Etudes Monast. t. i. p. 111, ed. Par. 1692.

<sup>2</sup> Vit. St Cuthbert, c. 37. See Mabillon, Anal. t. iv. pp. 521, 522.

of Jarrow, but was gained upon by the sea before the time of Simeon of Durham. St Bennet Biscop founded the Abbey of St Peter's, at Were-mouth, near the mouth of the Were, in 674, and that of St Paul's at Girvum, now Jarrow, in 680, on the banks of the River Tyne below the *Capræ caput*, still called Goat's-head or Gateshead, opposite to Newcastle. Such a harmony subsisted between the two houses that they were often governed by the same abbot and called the same monastery of SS. Peter and Paul. St Bennet was a man of extraordinary learning and piety, and enriched these monasteries with a large and curious library which he had collected at Rome and in other foreign parts. To his care Bede was committed at seven years of age, but was afterwards removed to Jarrow where he prosecuted his studies under the direction of the Abbot Ceolfrid, who had been St Bennet's fellow-traveller. Among other able masters under whom he made great progress he names Trumbert, a monk of Jarrow who had formerly been a disciple of St Chad, bishop, first of York, afterwards of Litchfield, who had established a great school in his Monastery of Lestingan in Yorkshire. The church music or chant Bede learned of John, formerly Precentor of St Peter's on the Vatican, and Abbot of St Martin's at Rome, whom Pope Agatho had sent over to England with St Bennet Biscop. The Greek language our saint must have learned of Theodorus, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Abbot Adrian, by whose instruction that language became as familiar to several of their English scholars as their native tongue; for an instance of which Bede mentions Tobias, Bishop of Rochester. How great a master Bede was of that language appears from his *Ars Metrica* and other works. His poem on St Cuthbert and other performances show him to have been a good poet for the age wherein he lived. But his comments on the holy scriptures and his sermons prove that the meditation on the word of God and the writings of the holy fathers chiefly engrossed his time and attention.

His great piety and endowments supplying the defect of age, by the order of his abbot, Ceolfrid, he was ordained deacon in 691, at nineteen years of age, by St John of Beverley, who was at that time Bishop of Hexham, in which diocese Jarrow was situated, there being then no episcopal see at Durham. From this time he continued his studies till, at thirty years of age, in 702, he was ordained priest by the same St John, who was made Bishop of Hexham in 685 and Bishop of York in 704. In King Alfred's version Bede is styled Mass Priest, because it was his employment to sing every day the conventual mass. He tells us that the holy abbot and founder, St Bennet Biscop, like the rest of the brethren, used to winnow the corn and thresh it, give milk to the lambs and calves, and to work in the bakehouse, garden, and kitchen. Bede must have sometimes had a share in such employments, and he was always cheerful, obedient, and indefatigable. But his studies and writings, with

assiduous meditation and prayer, must have chiefly employed him. He often copied books. From the time that he was promoted to priestly orders he began to compose books; and he had a great school in which he brought up many eminent and holy scholars and instructed his fellow monks, who amounted to the number of six hundred. Bede tells us of himself that he applied himself wholly to the meditation of the holy scriptures, and amidst the observance of regular discipline and the daily care of singing in the church it was his delight to be always employed either in learning, teaching, or writing. He says that from the time of his being made priest to the fifty-ninth year of his age, when he wrote this, he had compiled several books for his own use and that of others, gathering them out of the works of the venerable fathers or adding new comments according to their sense and interpretation. He gives a list of forty-five different works which he had then composed, of which thirty—and many of those are divided into several books—consist of comments on the Old and New Testaments. He wrote several other works after this. All the sciences and every branch of literature were handled by him: natural philosophy, the philosophical principles of Aristotle, astronomy, arithmetic, the calendar, grammar, ecclesiastical history, and the lives of the saints, though works of piety make up the bulk of his writings. The ornaments of rhetoric were not his study; but perspicuity (the first qualification in writing), an unaffected honesty and simplicity, and an affecting spirit of sincere piety and goodness of heart and charity, run through all his compositions and cannot fail to please. An honest candour and love of truth are so visibly the characteristics of his historical works that if some austere critics have suspected him sometimes of credulity, no man ever called in question his sincerity. If on the scriptures he often abridged or reduced to a methodical order the comments of St Austin, St Ambrose, St Jerom, St Basil, and other fathers, this he did, not out of sloth or for want of genius (as some later writers have done), but that he might stick closer to tradition in interpreting the sacred oracles; and in what he found not done by other eminent fathers he still followed their rules lest he should in the least tittle deviate from tradition. In the original comments which he wrote, he seems, in the opinion of good judges, not inferior in solidity and judgment to his ablest masters among the fathers.

John Bale, the apostate Carmelite friar and the sworn enemy of the monks and fathers, who was Bishop of Ossory under Edward VI and died Canon of Canterbury under Queen Elizabeth, could not refuse Bede the highest encomiums, and affirms that he certainly surpassed Gregory the Great in eloquence and copiousness of style, and that there is scarce anything in all antiquity worthy to be read which is not found in Bede. Dr John Pitts<sup>1</sup> advances that Europe scarce ever produced a greater

<sup>1</sup> De Script. Angl.

scholar; and that even whilst he was living his writings were of so great authority that a council ordered them to be publicly read in the churches. Folcard, a very learned monk of Christchurch in Canterbury, and Abbot of Thorney in the days of St Edward the Confessor and the Conqueror, originally from Sithiu, in his life of St John of Beverley quoted by Leland, says of Bede, "It is amazing how this great man became so perfect in all the branches of those sciences to which he applied himself, whereby he conquered all difficulties and brought those of his own nation to form right notions; so that from the rude and boorish manners of their ancestors they began to be exceedingly civilised and polite through their desire of learning, of which he not only taught them the grounds whilst living, but in his works left them a kind of *Encyclopædia* (or universal library) for the instruction of youth after his decease." Fuller writes of him: "He expounded almost all the Bible, translated the Psalms and New Testament into English, and lived a comment on those words of the apostle, 'shining as a light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.'" What we most admire in Bede is the piety with which he pursued and sanctified his studies and the use which he made of them. Hence his life was a model of devotion, obedience, humility, simplicity, charity, and penance. He declined the abbatial dignity which was pressed upon him. Malmesbury gives us a letter of Pope Sergius<sup>1</sup> by which, with many honourable expressions, he was invited to Rome, that pope desiring to see and consult him in certain matters of the greatest importance. This must have happened about the time that he was ordained priest. Bede, out of modesty, suppressed this circumstance. What hindered his journey thither we know not; but we have his word for it that he lived from his childhood in his monastery without travelling abroad—that is, without taking any considerable journey. His reputation drew to him many visits from all the greatest men in Britain, particularly from the pious King Ceolwulph. Ecgbright, or Egberct, brother to Eadbyrht, King of Northumberland, who was consecrated Archbishop of York in 734, had been a scholar of Bede. At his pressing invitation our saint went to York and taught there some months, but excused himself from leaving his monastery the following year. This school, set up at York, became very flourishing, and Alcuin, one of its greatest ornaments, is said to have been himself a scholar of Bede. Our saint died soon after Ecgbright's accession to the see of York, but lived long enough to write him a letter upon his advancement. Herein he puts him in mind that it was a most essential part of his duty to place everywhere able and learned priests, to labour strenuously himself in feeding his flock, in correcting all vice, and endeavouring to convert all sinners, and to take care that everyone knew the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and was thoroughly instructed

<sup>1</sup> Lib. i. de Reg. c. 3.

in the articles of our holy religion. He gives it as an important piece of advice that all among the laity whose lives are pure (or free from vice) communicate every Sunday and on the festivals of the apostles and martyrs, as he says Ecgbright had seen practised at Rome; but Bede requires that married persons prepare themselves by continence to receive the holy communion,<sup>1</sup> which was formerly a precept repeated in several councils, but is now by disuse looked upon as no more than a counsel, but a counsel which St Charles Borromeo recommends to be inculcated. Bede died within the compass of a year after he wrote this letter. Cuthbert, called also Antony, one of his scholars to whom the saint dedicated his book, *Arts Metrica*, wrote to one Cuthwin, a monk, who had formerly been his school-fellow under Bede, an account of the death of their dear master. This Cuthbert was afterwards Abbot of Jarrow, in which dignity he succeeded Huethbert, called also Eusebius, another scholar of Bede.

The letter of Cuthbert<sup>2</sup> deserves to have a place in the life of Bede, though it is here something abridged. "To his most beloved in Christ and fellow-reader, Cuthwin, his schoolfellow Cuthbert wishes eternal salvation in our Lord. Your small present was very acceptable, and your letter gave me much satisfaction, wherein I found what I greatly desired, that masses and prayers are said by you for Bede, the beloved of God, our late father and master. For the love I bear him, I send you in few words an account of the manner in which he departed this world, understanding it is what you desire. He began to be much troubled with a shortness of breath about two weeks before Easter, yet without pain: thus he lived cheerful and rejoicing, giving thanks to Almighty God every day and night—nay, every hour—till the day of our Lord's Ascension, which was the 26th of May. He daily read lessons to us his scholars; the rest of the day he spent in singing psalms; he also passed all the night awake in joy and thanksgiving, only when he was interrupted by a short slumber; but awaking, he repeated his accustomed exercises and ceased not to give thanks to God, with his hands expanded. O truly happy man! He sung that sentence of St Paul: 'It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' and much more out of holy writ. Being well skilled in English verses, he recited some things in our tongue. He said in English, 'No man is too wise to consider what good or evil he has done before the necessary departure'—that is, to examine the state of his soul sufficiently before his death. He also sung anthems, according to his and our custom, one of which is, 'O glorious King, Lord of Hosts, who, triumphing this day, didst ascend above all the heavens, leave us not orphans; but send down the Father's Spirit of truth upon us: Alleluia.' When he came to that word, 'leave us not,' he burst into tears and wept

<sup>1</sup> Bed. ep. Ecgbright, ap. Smith, p. 311.

<sup>2</sup> Ap. Simeon Dunelm, Hist. Dunelm, lib. i. c. 15, et ap. Smith, p. 792.



much; and an hour after he began to repeat the same anthem he had commenced, and we, hearing it, grieved with him. By turns we read, and by turns we wept—nay, we always wept even when we read. In such joy we passed the fifth day, and he rejoiced much and gave God thanks because he deserved to be so infirm. He often repeated that ‘God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,’ and much more out of the scriptures; also that sentence of St Ambrose, ‘I have not lived so as to be ashamed to live among you, nor am I afraid to die, because we have a good God.’ During these days, besides the daily lessons he gave, and the singing of psalms, he composed two works for the benefit of the church; the one was a translation of St John’s gospel into English as far as those words, ‘But what are these among so many?’ the other, some collections out of St Isidore’s book of notes; for he said, ‘I will not have my scholars read a falsehood after my death and labour without advantage.’ On Tuesday before the Ascension he began to be much worse in his breathing and a small swelling appeared in his feet; but he passed all that day pleasantly and dictated in school, saying now and then, ‘Go on quickly; I know not how long I shall hold out, and whether my Maker will soon take me away.’ To us he seemed very well to know the time of his departure. He spent the night awake in thanksgiving. On Wednesday morning he ordered us to write speedily what he had begun. After this we made the procession, according to the custom of that day, walking with the relics of the saints till the third hour [or nine o’clock in the morning]; then one of us said to him, ‘Most dear master, there is still one chapter wanting. Do you think it troublesome to be asked any more questions?’ He answered, ‘It is no trouble. Take your pen and write fast.’ He did so. But at the ninth hour [three in the afternoon] he said to me, ‘Run quickly; and bring all the priests of the monastery to me.’ When they came he distributed to them some peppercorns, little cloths or handkerchiefs, and incense, which he had in a little box, entreating everyone that they would carefully celebrate masses and say prayers for him, which they readily promised to do. They all wept at his telling them they should no more see his face in this world, but rejoiced to hear him say, ‘It is now time for me to return to him who made me, and gave me a being when I was nothing. I have lived a long time; my most merciful Judge most graciously foresaw and ordered the course of my life for me. The time of my dissolution draws near. I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Yes! my soul desires to see Christ, my king, in his beauty.’ Many other things he spoke to our edification, and spent the rest of the day in joy till the evening. The above-mentioned young scholar, whose name was Wilberth, said to him, ‘Dear master, there is still one sentence that is not written.’ He answered, ‘Write quickly.’ The young man said, ‘It is now done.’ He replied,

'You have well said; it is at an end: all is finished. Hold my head that I may have the pleasure to sit, looking towards my little oratory where I used to pray; that whilst I am sitting I may call upon my heavenly Father, and on the pavement of his little place sing, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."' Thus he prayed on the floor, and when he had named the Holy Ghost he breathed out his soul. All declared that they had never seen anyone die with such great devotion and tranquillity; for so long as his soul was in his body he never ceased, with his hands expanded, to give thanks and praise to God, repeating, 'Glory be to the Father,' &c., with other spiritual acts. I have many other things I could relate of him; and I have a thought of writing more amply on this subject," &c.

Ranulph Higden<sup>1</sup> relates the manner of his holy departure. "After teaching all day, it was his custom to watch much in the nights. Finding by the swelling of his feet that death approached, he received extreme unction, and then the Viaticum on the Tuesday before the Ascension of the Lord, and gave the kiss of peace to all his brethren, imploring their pious remembrance after his death. On the feast of the Ascension, lying on sackcloth spread on the floor, he invited the grace of the Holy Ghost: and continued in praise and thanksgiving, in which he breathed forth his holy soul." St Bede died in the year 735, of his age sixty-two, on Wednesday evening the 26th of May, after the first vespers of Our Lord's Ascension; whence many authors say he died on the feast of the Ascension; for our Saxon ancestors reckoned festivals from first vespers. Thus from repeating the divine praises here in the most pure and profound sentiments of compunction, humility, zeal, and love, he passed, as it were, without intermission to sing eternally the same praises with affections at once infinitely dilated with inexpressible holy joy, ardour, and love, in the glorious choirs of the blessed and in the beatific contemplation of God, whom he praised and loved. His feast was kept in England in some places on the 26th of May, with a commemoration only in the office of St Austin; in others it was deferred to the 27th, on which it occurs in the Roman Martyrology. In the constitution of John Alcock, Bishop of Ely, for the festivals of his diocese, printed in 1498 by Pynson, Bede's feast is ordered to be kept with an office on the 13th of March, the day of his death being taken up by the office of St Austin. Certain congregations of the Benedictin Order have long kept his office on the 29th of October, perhaps on account of some translation. On the same day it is celebrated at present in England, and, by a special privilege, the office is said by all English priests who live in foreign countries, by an indult or grant of Pope Benedict XIV, given in 1754; which grant—at least, with regard to those clergymen or regulars who were in England—was interpreted at Rome to imply a precept.

<sup>1</sup> Polychron. lib. v. ad an 732.

Alcuin<sup>1</sup> having extolled the learning and virtues of this holy doctor, says that his sanctity was attested by the voice of heaven after his death; for a sick man was freed from a fever upon the spot by touching his relics. St Lullus, Archbishop of Mentz, wrote to his scholar Cuthbert, then Abbot of Weremouth and Jarrow, to beg a copy of Bede's works, and sent him a cloak for his own use and a silk vest to cover the shrine of this great servant of God. At that time a vest was a usual present even to kings. Bede was buried in St Paul's Church in Jarrow, where a porch on the north side bore his name. In 1020 his sacred remains were conveyed to Durham and laid in a bag and wooden trunk in the shrine of St Cuthbert, as Simeon of Durham relates. In 1155 they were taken up by Hugh, Bishop of Durham, and inclosed in a rich shrine of curious workmanship, adorned with gold, silver, and jewels, as we learn from the appendix to the History of Durham, compiled by Simeon of Durham, who wrote from the memoirs of Turgot, the learned Prior of Durham in the reign of Edward the Confessor, made Archbishop of St Andrew's in the reign of the Conqueror, whose declared enemy he was. Hence Turgot's history has been by some ascribed to him. At the change of religion in England the shrines of the saints were plundered by the royal commissioners, but these were anticipated by private robbers in many places. At the same time the relics were scattered or publicly burnt. This latter part of the commission, which was rigorously executed near the court and in the southern provinces, was not much regarded in the more remote northern counties, where they were usually interred in the churches where their shrines were kept, as we see in St Cuthbert's, St John of Beverley's, &c. Speed, in his Theatre of Britain, says his marble monument subsisted, when he wrote, in Our Lady's Chapel in the western part of the Church of Durham. Sir George Wheeler, who died Prebendary of Durham and was a great admirer of Bede, according to his will, is buried within the cathedral near the foot of Bede's tomb, and has an inscription, whereas none is now found over St Bede's. Mr Smith has given a type of the remains which are now standing,<sup>2</sup> and another of the altar of St Cuthbert and St Bede, delineated from the paintings of the eastern window.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless the monks of Glastonbury laid claim to St Bede's relics, or a portion of them.<sup>4</sup> Boniface calls St Bede the lamp of the English church; St Lullus, Alcuin, and other writers from the time of his death exceedingly extol his learning and sanctity. By Lanfranc and many others he is styled the doctor and father of the English. Trithemius imagined that the title of "Venerable" was conferred on him in his lifetime. But Mabillon shows, from the silence of all former writers, that it was begun to be given him, out of a peculiar respect, only in the ninth age, when it

<sup>1</sup> Alcuin, *Carm. de pontif. et Sanct. Eccl. Eborac* v. 1305.

<sup>2</sup> App. ad Hist. Bedæ, p. 805.

<sup>3</sup> Frontispiece, ib.

<sup>4</sup> See *Monast. Angl. t. i.*, and John of Glastonbury.

was used by Amalarius, Jonas, Usuard, &c.<sup>1</sup> He was styled Saint, and placed in foreign Martyrologies long before that time, by Hincmar, Notker,<sup>2</sup> in the Litany of St Gall's, &c. Rabanus Maurus mentions an altar at Fulde, of which Bede was titular saint. The second council of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 836, calls him "The venerable, and, in the modern times, admirable doctor," &c.

It was the happiness of Venerable Bede that, receiving his education under the direction of saints, by their example, spirit, and instructions he learned from his infancy the maxims and practice of perfect sanctity. St Chrysostom<sup>3</sup> wished that parents would breed up their children in monasteries till they are to be produced in the world. Several Roman senators and other noblemen committed the education of their sons to St Bennet. The most austere and regular monasteries have been chosen by virtuous parents of the first rank, whose principal desire was that their children should be brought up among saints, where their passions would be in no danger of being flattered and where their minds would be filled with Christian verities and Christ's spirit, and their hearts formed to piety grounded in the love and exercised in habits of all virtues. This is the first and essential advantage which parents are bound to procure their children, upon which their temporal and eternal happiness depends and all other advantages and qualifications are to be founded. Let them not be neglected, but let this be secured in the first place and at all rates.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 27 :*

ST BEDE THE VENERABLE, Father of the Church : ST JOHN, Pope, 523-526 ; by birth a Tuscan, the oracle and model of the Roman clergy before he was made pope ; died from his cruel imprisonment in Ravenna and is buried in the Vatican : ST JULIUS, a veteran soldier, martyred about 302, in the reign of Diocletian.

MAY 28

## ST GERMANUS, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF PARIS

(A.D. 576)

[See his life by Fortunatus of Poitiers, St Gregory of Tours, *Hist. lib. iv. c. 26.* Mabillon, *Annal. Bened. lib. v. p. 132*, and *Acta Ord. Bened. t. i. p. 234.* Also Dom. Boullart, *Hist. de l'Abbaye de St Germain des Prez*, fol. Paris, 1723. Dom. Lobineau, *Hist. de Paris*, n. 25, 29, &c.]

ST GERMANUS, the glory of the church of France in the sixth age, was born in the territory of Autun about the year 469. He was brought up in piety and learning under the care of Scapilion, his cousin, a holy priest. In his youth no weather could divert him from always going to matins at midnight, though the church was above a mile from the place of his abode. Being ordained priest by St Agrippinus, Bishop of Autun, he

<sup>1</sup> Mab. *ib.* *Elog. Hist. et ap. Smith in App. p. 807.*

<sup>2</sup> Notker, *ad 13, Cal. Apr.*

<sup>3</sup> St Chrys. *lib. iii. contr. Vitup. Vitæ Monast. pp. 94, 95, 99, t. i. ed. Ben.*

was made Abbot of St Symphorian's, in the suburbs of that city, a house since converted into a priory of regular canons. Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, who was well acquainted with our saint, tells us that he was favoured at that time with the gifts of miracles and prophecy. It was his custom to watch great part of the night in the church in prayer, whilst his monks slept. One night, in a dream, he thought a venerable old man presented him with the keys of the city of Paris and said to him that God committed to his care the inhabitants of that city that he should save them from perishing. Four years after this divine admonition, in 554, happening to be in Paris when that see became vacant on the demise of the Bishop Eusebius, he was exalted to the episcopal chair, though he endeavoured by many tears to decline the charge. His promotion made no alteration in his continual fasts and other austerities; and the same simplicity and frugality appeared in his dress, table, and furniture. In the evening, at nine o'clock, he went to the church and stayed there in prayer till after matins, that is, in summer, till about break of day. His house was perpetually crowded with the poor and the afflicted, and he had always many beggars at his own table, at which no dainty meats were ever served; he took care that the souls of his guests should be refreshed at the same time with their bodies, by the reading of some pious book. God gave to his sermons a wonderful influence over the minds of all ranks of people; so that the face of the whole city was in a very short time quite changed. Vanities were abolished, dances and profane amusements laid aside, enmities and discord extinguished, and sinners reclaimed. King Childebert, who till then had been an ambitious, worldly prince, by the sweetness and the powerful discourses of the saint, was entirely converted to piety, and by his advice reformed his whole court. And so desirous did that prince become of exchanging the perishing goods of this world for eternal treasures that, not content with making many religious foundations, to be nurseries of piety in all succeeding ages, and with sending incredible sums of money to the good bishop to be distributed among the indigent, after his coffers were drained he melted down his silver plate, and gave away the chains which he wore about his neck, begging the bishop, whom he made the steward of his charities, never to cease giving, assuring him that on his side he should never be tired with supplying all things for the relief and comfort of the distressed.

In the year 542 King Childebert, together with his brother Clotaire, making war in Spain, besieged Saragossa. The inhabitants in that city reposed a particular confidence in the patronage of St Vincent, whose relics they carried in procession within sight of the French camp. King Childebert was moved with their devotion, and, desiring to speak with the bishop of the city, promised to withdraw his army on condition he might obtain some portion of the relics of St Vincent. The bishop gave him

the stole which that holy deacon wore at the altar. Upon which the king raised the siege, and at his return to Paris built a church in honour of St Vincent and of the Holy Cross, which is now called St Germain's-in-the-Meadows and stands in the suburbs of Paris. Chilbert falling sick at his palace at Celles, near Melun, at the confluence of the Yon and Seine, St Germanus paid him a visit; and when the physicians had in vain tried everything, all human means failing, the saint spent the whole night in prayer for his recovery and in the morning laid his hands on him; and at the same moment the king found himself perfectly healed. The king relates himself this miracle in his letters patent, in which, in gratitude to God for this benefit, he gave to the church of Paris and the Bishop Germanus the land of Celles, where he had received this favour. The good king did not long survive. As the king had chosen the Church of St Vincent for the place of his burial, the saint, assisted by six other bishops, performed the ceremony of the dedication on the 23rd of September 558, the very day on which that prince died. The king likewise had built a large monastery joining to this new church, which he endowed most liberally with the fief of Issy and other lands, on part of which a considerable suburb of Paris has been since built. This magnificent edifice was called the Golden Church, the walls being covered on the outside with plates of brass gilt, and within adorned with paintings on a rich gilt ground.<sup>1</sup> This church was plundered by the Normans in 845, 857, 858, and set on fire by them in 861 and 881; but rebuilt in 1014 and dedicated by Pope Alexander III in 1163. The lower part of the great tower and its gate, with the statues of Clovis, Clodomir, Thierri, Chilbert, and his wife Ultrogotta, Clotaire, and others, seem to be as old as the time of King Chilbert. This prince committed the monastery and church to the care of our saint, who placed there monks under the holy Abbot Droctoveus, whom he invited from Autun, where he had formed him to a religious life. Clotaire, who succeeded his brother Chilbert, was the last of the sons of the great Clovis; and united again the four kingdoms of France into one monarchy. On his removing from Soissons to Paris, he at first seemed to treat the holy bishop coldly; but falling ill soon after of a violent fever, was put in mind by some that were about him to send for St Germanus. He did so, and full of confidence in the power of God and the sanctity of his servant, took hold of his clothes and applied them to the parts of his body where he felt pain and recovered immediately. From that moment he always treated the saint even with greater honour than Chilbert had done. But that prince dying shortly after, in 561, his four sons, Charibert, Gontran, Sigebert, and Chilperic, divided the French monarchy into four kingdoms in the same manner as the sons of Clovis had done. That of Paris was given

<sup>1</sup> See the description of this church in the life of St Droctoveus, written by Gislemar the monk.

to Charibert, or Aribert; Gontran was King of Orleans and Burgundy; Sigebert of Austrasia, and Chilperic of Soissons. Charibert sunk into a vicious indolence, yet was obstinate and headstrong in his passions; not being divested of all the prejudices of paganism, he divorced his wife Ingoberga and took to wife Marcovesa, her maid, who had worn a religious habit; and after her death he married her sister Merofteda, Ingoberga being still living. Our saint in many ways endeavoured to make him sensible of the enormity of his crimes; but finding all his remonstrances lost on him, he proceeded to excommunicate him and the accomplice of his sin, to hinder at least the dangerous influence of his scandalous example. The sinners were hardened in their evil courses; but God revenged the contempt of his laws and of the holy pastor, as he has often done, by visible judgments; for the criminal lady fell ill and died in a few days, and the adulterous king did not long survive her, leaving by his lawful wife only three daughters, two of whom became nuns, the third, called Bertha, was married to Ethelbert, King of Kent.

Upon the death of Charibert in 570, his three brothers divided his dominions; but not being able to agree who should be master of Paris, the capital, came to an accommodation that they should hold it jointly, on condition that none of them should go into the city without leave of the other two. St Germanus found his flock involved by this agreement in great difficulties, and the city divided into three different parties, always plotting and counterplotting against one another. He did all that the most consummate charity, prudence, and vigilance could do to preserve the public peace; yet Sigebert and Chilperic appeared in arms, being fired by ambition and stirred up by their wicked queens, Fredegonda, wife of the latter, and Brunehaut of the former, burning with the most implacable jealousy against each other. The saint prevailed with them to suspend their hostilities for some time. At length Chilperic invaded the territories of Sigebert, but being worsted in battle, fled to Tournay. This victory left Sigebert free with liberty to go to Paris with his wife Brunehaut, and children, where he was received as conqueror. St Germanus wrote to the queen, conjuring her to employ her interest with her husband to restore the peace of France and to spare the life and fortune of a brother, whose ruin and blood would cry to heaven for vengeance. But Brunehaut's passion rendered her deaf to all remonstrances, and Sigebert was determined by her furious counsels to besiege Tournay. As he was setting out for this enterprise he was met by St Germanus, who told him that if he forgave his brother he should return victorious; but if he was bent on his death, divine justice would overtake him, and his own death should prevent the execution of his unnatural design. Sigebert allowed this wholesome advice no weight; but the event showed that God had put these words into the mouth of the good bishop; for Queen Fredegonda,

enraged at the desperate posture of her husband's affairs, hired two assassins who dispatched him with poisoned daggers whilst he made a halt in his march at Vitri in 575, after he had reigned fourteen years with some reputation of humanity, as Fortunatus tells us.

Chilperic, by his tyranny and oppressions, deserved to be styled the French Nero, as St Gregory of Tours calls him. He sacrificed his own children by former wives to the fury of Fredegonda, but having discovered her infidelity to him, he was, by her contrivance, murdered by her gallant in 584. Fredegonda was regent of the kingdoms of Soissons and Paris for her son Clotaire II, and continued her practices and wars against Brunehaut and her son till she died in 601. Brunehaut governed the kingdom of Austrasia for her son Childebert II, and, after his death, for her grandson Theodebert; but afterwards persuaded Theodoric, her second grandson, who reigned at Challons, to destroy him and his whole family in 611. The year following Theodoric died, and Clotaire II, surnamed the Great, son of Fredegonda, inheriting both their estates, accused Brunehaut before the states of putting to death ten kings and St Desiderius, Bishop of Vienne, because he had reproved her for her public scandalous lusts, and many other illustrious persons. She had at first appeared liberal, and built several churches; but afterwards became infamous for her cruelty, avarice, restless ambition, and insatiable lusts, to which she sacrificed all things, and employed both the sword and poison in perpetrating her wicked designs. Being condemned by the states, she was put to the rack during three days, and afterwards dragged to death, being tied to the tail of a wild mare; or, according to others, drawn betwixt four horses in 613.<sup>1</sup>

St Germanus lived not to see the miserable ends of these two firebrands of their country. In his old age he lost nothing of that zeal and activity with which he had filled the great duties of his station in the vigour of his life; nor did the weakness to which his corporeal austerities had reduced him make him abate anything in the mortification of his penitential life, in which he redoubled his fervour as he approached nearer to the end of his course. By his zeal the remains of idolatry were extirpated in France. In the third council of Paris, in 557, he had the principal share in drawing up the canons. By his advice, King Childebert issued an edict commanding all idols to be destroyed throughout his dominions and forbidding all indecent dances and diversions on Sundays and festivals. The saint continued his labours for the conversion of sinners till he was called to receive the reward of them on the 28th of May 576, being eighty years old. King Chilperic composed his epitaph, in which he extols his zeal for the salvation of his people and their affection and veneration for his person. He mentions the miracles which were wrought at his

<sup>1</sup> See Mezeray and Challon's Hist. of France.



tomb, and says that sight was restored to the blind and speech to the dumb.<sup>1</sup> He was, according to his own desire, buried in St Symphorian's chapel, which he built at the bottom of the Church of St Vincent, already mentioned. Many miracles manifested his sanctity, of which Fortunatus, then a priest, afterwards Bishop of Poitiers, has left us a history, in which he gives two on his own evidence. Also two anonymous monks compiled relations of several miracles of St Germanus which Aimoinus, a monk of this monastery in 870, and a careful writer, digested into two books.<sup>2</sup> The relics of St Germanus remained in the aforesaid chapel in the year 754, when the abbot removed them into the body of the church. The ceremony of this translation was performed with great solemnity; and King Pepin thought himself honoured by assisting at it. Prince Charles, known afterwards by the title of Charlemagne, who was then but seven years old, attended his father on this occasion, and was so strongly affected with the miracles performed at that time that when he came to the crown he took a particular pleasure in relating them, with all their circumstances. The characteristic virtue of St Germanus was his unbounded charity to the poor. Liberality in alms moves God to be liberal to us in the dispensations of his spiritual graces; but he who hardens his heart to the injuries and wants of others shuts against himself the treasury of heaven.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 28 :*

ST CARAUNUS or CARO (in French, CHERON) lived towards the end of the fifth age; at the death of his parents he gave all to the poor and retired to the desert, wherefrom the bishop of the diocese, discovering his merits, ordained him. He died "a martyr of charity" : ST GERMANUS, Bishop : BLESSED JOHN SHIRT : BLESSED MARGARET POLE, Countess of Salisbury : and BLESSED ROBERT JOHNSON, the last named three being English martyrs.

## MAY 29

### ST CYRIL, MARTYR

THIS saint was as yet a child when he glorified God by martyrdom at Cæsarea, in Cappadocia. His father being an idolater, seeing his young son, who had been privately made a Christian, refuse to adore his idols, after all manner of severe usage turned him out of doors. The governor of Cæsarea, being informed of it, gave orders that Cyril should be brought before him. Enraged to hear him never cease to proclaim the name of Jesus, he told him with many caresses that he ought to detest that name, and promised him the pardon of his faults, a reconciliation with his father, and the inheritance of his estate, if he obeyed. The courageous child answered, "I rejoice in suffering reproaches for what I have done. God will receive me, with whom I shall be better than with my father. I cheerfully renounce earthly estates and house, that I may be made rich in heaven.

<sup>1</sup> Apud Aimoinum, lib. ii. c. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Apud Mab. sæc. 4, Bened. t. ii., and Bolland. ad 28 Maij.

I am not afraid of death, because it will procure me a better life." This he said with a courage which showed that God spoke in him. The judge commanded him to be publicly bound and to be led as if it had been to execution, but he gave orders in private that they should only frighten him. Being placed before a great fire and threatened to be thrown into it, yet he was not daunted. He was then carried back to the judge, who said to him, "My child, you have seen both the fire and the sword. Be wise and return to your house and fortune." The martyr answered, "You have done me a real prejudice in calling me back. I neither fear the fire nor the sword; God will receive me. Put me to death without delay, that I may the sooner go to him." All the assistants wept to hear him speak in this manner. But he said to them, "You ought rather to rejoice; you know not what is my hope, nor what kind of kingdom I am going to possess." With these sentiments he went joyfully to his death. He seems to have died by the sword. His name occurs in the Martyrology which bears the name of St Jerom, and in that of Florus. He suffered under Decius or Valerian. See his authentic acts in Ruinart and Henschenius, probably compiled by St Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 29 :*

ST CONON AND HIS SON, martyrs, of Iconia in Asia; both being stretched on a burning grid-iron, they remained steadfast to the end; their glorious death took place about 275: ST CYRIL, a child martyr: ST MAXIMINUS, holy from his childhood, chosen to succeed St Agritius, Bishop of Triers; he received St Athanasius when he was banished to that place; the latter bears witness to his sanctity, courage, and gift of miracles: BLESSED RICHARD THIRKELD, martyr: ST SISINNIVS, ST MARTYRIUS, and ST ALEXANDER, martyrs in the territory of Trent. The two last named were brothers. Beaten with clubs by the pagans, Sisinnius died in a few hours; Martirius underwent great hardships; and Alexander, still as steadfast as the others had been, was finally burned alive in the same fire as the dead bodies of his fellow-martyrs.

#### MAY 30

### ST FERDINAND III, CONFESSOR, KING OF CASTILE AND LEON

He was eldest son to Alphonsus, King of Leon, and of Berangera of Castile, elder sister<sup>1</sup> of Blanche, mother of St Lewis of France, and was born about the end of the year 1198 or some time in 1199. Berangera had been obliged by Pope Innocent III to a separation from Alphonsus of Leon, after having borne to him two sons, Ferdinand and Alphonsus, and two daughters, because, though in the third degree of consanguinity, they had been married without a dispensation, which was at that time very difficult to be obtained. But, because this marriage had been contracted *bona fide* by the decrees of the pope and the states of the two kingdoms, their children were declared their lawful heirs. Berangera returned to

<sup>1</sup> Roderiguez, at that time first dean, then Archbishop of Toledo, assures us that Berangera was the eldest of all the children of this king, and next heir to the kingdom after her brother's death. It is therefore a notorious mistake of those who call Blanche the elder sister.

her father, Alphonsus IX of Castile, one of the most valiant and virtuous kings that ever reigned in Spain, and who was to her the most tender and the best of fathers. He dying in 1214, his son Henry, eleven years of age, succeeded him, under the tutorship and regency of his mother, Eleanor of England. But she followed her husband to the grave within twenty-five days, grief for having lost him being the cause of her death. Berangera was charged with the guardianship of her brother and the regency of the kingdom, but out of love of retirement suffered herself to be persuaded to resign both to a nobleman called Don Alvarez, who proved a perfidious, turbulent man, and for several years embroiled all Castile and the neighbouring kingdoms. Berangera was a princess of accomplished prudence and piety, and exercises of devotion were her chief delight. King Henry, by the contrivance of Alvarez, at twelve years of age was married to Mafalda, sister to Alphonsus, King of Portugal, but upon an impediment of consanguinity, which was proved before commissaries, Pope Innocent III declared the marriage null, and Mafalda, returning to Portugal, founded a Cistercian nunnery at Arouca, took herself the veil, and lived in so great sanctity as to be honoured among the saints on the 1st of May. The young King Henry died of a wound he received by a tile falling upon his head at Palencia on the 6th of June 1217, and Berangera put in her claim to the crown; but transferring her right upon her son Ferdinand, surnamed the Saint, caused him, who was in the eighteenth year of his age, to be proclaimed king of Palencia, Valladolid, and Burgos, having first lodged in the archives of the church of this last city the solemn act of her own resignation. Don Alvarez and other factious spirits filled the kingdom with disturbances and civil wars for several years; but these the young king, by his clemency, prudence, and valour, assisted by his mother's counsels, stifled and overcame. Alvarez was taken and pardoned, and perfidiously renewed his treasonable cabals and broils, both at home and abroad. Though Ferdinand was so great a king, no child ever obeyed a mother with a more ready and perfect submission than he did Berangera to the time of her death, as his ancient historian assures us.<sup>1</sup> By her advice he took to wife, in 1219, Beatrix, daughter of Philip of Suabia, Emperor of Germany, a most virtuous and accomplished princess. The happy union of their hearts was never disturbed by the least cloud during the fifteen years of their cohabitation; and their marriage was blessed with a numerous family of seven sons and three daughters. St Ferdinand was severe in the administration and the execution of the laws, but readily pardoned all personal injuries; and no sooner were rebellions crushed but he granted general amnesties. His prudence and his constant attention to the care of his people appeared most conspicuous in the happy choice he always made of governors,

<sup>1</sup> Luc. Tudens.

magistrates, and generals. Rodriguez, Archbishop of Toledo and Chancellor of Castile, was during thirty years at the head of all his councils, and so perfectly united with Berangera and St Ferdinand in all their deliberations as to seem to have but one soul with them. To set a curb to inferior tribunals he established the court, since called the Royal Council of Castile, which consists of ten auditors, and to which there lies an appeal from all other courts. A code of laws which he caused to be compiled by the most able lawyers is still used in that kingdom.

Nothing ever so much troubled our saint as when his own father, Alphonsus, King of Leon, stirred up by Alvarez, laid claim to and invaded his dominions. St Ferdinand endeavoured, by the most dutiful and endearing letters, to give him all possible satisfaction, and lent him his own forces to fight against the Moors. With this succour his father conquered Caures, Merida, and Badajoz, and extended his dominions to the frontiers of Andalusia. Being resolved as much as possible never to draw his sword but against the infidels, he restored several places the claims to which seemed doubtful, and waved all occasions of quarrels with the kings of Portugal and Arragon, and with Eleanor of England in Gascony. He founded several bishoprics and contributed munificently to the building or repairing of many stately cathedrals, other churches, monasteries, and hospitals. No necessity could ever make him impose any heavy tax upon his subjects. In his wars with the Moors, when one suggested to him a method of raising an extraordinary subsidy, he rejected the proposal with indignation, saying, "God would not fail to supply him other ways, and that he feared more the curse of one poor old woman than the whole army of the Moors." He first marched against them into the kingdom of Baëza in 1225, and in the second year Aben Mahomet, a prince of the race of the Miramolins of Africa, king of that country, yielded himself up vassal to King Ferdinand and surrendered to him his strongest holds. In 1230 he took nearly twenty strong places in Andalusia and in the kingdoms of Cordova and Jaën. Aben Mahomet having been murdered by a general conspiracy of his subjects because he had made himself vassal to a Christian king who was the sworn enemy of their religion, St Ferdinand took occasion to conquer the whole kingdom of Baëza, and to erect a bishopric in its capital. His whole conduct bore testimony to the truth of his solemn protestation, in which he appealed to heaven, saying:<sup>1</sup> "Thou, O Lord, who searchest the secrets of hearts, knowest that I desire thy glory, not mine; and the increase of thy faith and holy religion, not of transitory kingdoms." The Archbishop Rodriguez performed the solemn office and all pastoral functions in the army, and the Bishop of Palencia in his room, one year that he happened to be sick. St Ferdinand set his soldiers the most perfect example of devotion. He fasted rigorously,

<sup>1</sup> Sancius, *Episc. Palent. Hist. Hisp.* par. 3. c. 39.

prayed much, wore a rough hair-shirt made in the shape of a cross, spent often whole nights in tears and prayers, especially before battles, and gave to God the whole glory of all his victories. In his army he caused an image of the Blessed Virgin to be carried, and wore another small one on his breast, or sometimes when on horseback placed it on the pommel of his saddle before him. From the spoils taken in war he contributed in a truly royal manner to the rebuilding of the most stately cathedral of Toledo, of which he laid the first stone. Several towns which were conquered from the Moors he gave to the Order of Calatrava or others, and to the archbishopric of Toledo, upon condition they should defend them against the infidels. This is the origin of the great riches of that archbishopric and of the military religious Orders in Spain.

St Ferdinand was marching to lay siege to Jaën in 1230 when he received news of the death of his father, Alphonsus of Leon, and was called by his mother to take possession of that kingdom, which from that time has remained united with Castile. It cost him three years to settle the affairs of his new kingdom; but in 1234 he recommenced his wars against the Moors by the siege of Ubeda, which he took after having spent the whole campaign before it. In the meantime, the infant Alphonsus, with fifteen hundred men, defeated at Xeres the formidable army of Abenhut, King of Seville, divided into seven bodies of troops, each of which was more numerous than the whole Christian army. From the deposition of several prisoners and others, the Christians concluded that the apostle St James had appeared at the head of their troops in the armour of a knight, mounted on a white horse; and this victory cost the Christians only the lives of one knight, who had refused to forgive an injury, and ten soldiers. The joy of these victories was allayed by the death of the virtuous Queen Beatrix, St Ferdinand's consort, who departed this life at Toro about the beginning of the year 1236. The grief for this loss did not long suspend his warlike operations; and whilst James, King of Arragon, wrested from the Moors the kingdom of Majorca and that of Valentia, he completed the conquest of the two Moorish kingdoms of Baëza and Cordova. This last city had been in the hands of those infidels five hundred and twenty-four years, and had been long the capital of their empire in Spain, when St Ferdinand, after a long siege, entered it by capitulation, on SS. Peter and Paul's day in 1236. The great mosque was purified by John, Bishop of Osma, and converted into a church under the invocation of the Mother of God, and St Ferdinand refounded there a bishopric. The great bells of Compostella, which Almansor had caused to be brought hither on the backs of Christians, St Ferdinand commanded to be carried back on the backs of Moors.

In 1237, by the counsels of his mother, he married a second wife, chiefly at the recommendation of his aunt Blanche, Dowager Queen of

France. This was Jane of Ponthieu, who bore him two sons and a daughter and lived in the most happy constant harmony with the queen-mother and the king till their death, and joined them in all their exercises of piety and devotion. The winter they usually spent together; in spring, when the king put himself at the head of his army to march to new conquests, she usually assisted Berangera in superintending the domestic administration of the affairs of state. St Ferdinand, in the campaigns which followed the taking of Cordova, made himself master of twenty-four other towns, of which Ecija was the first and Moron the last. Abenhudiel, King of Murcia, voluntarily surrendered his kingdom to King Ferdinand, reserving some open places to himself and certain lords of his country, which they were to hold in vassalage. St Ferdinand sent his son Alphonsus to take possession of the city of Murcia, to purify the mosques, and establish there a bishopric. The strong cities of Lorca, Mula, and Carthagera, which refused to yield themselves up to him, he took three years after. Arjona and Jaën maintained obstinate sieges, but at length fell into the hands of Ferdinand, with Alcala, Real, Ivora, and some other places dependent on Jaën. The loss of this capital so terrified Benalhamar, King of Granada, that he repaired to the camp of Ferdinand, cast himself at the feet of the conqueror, and offered to hold his kingdom of him in vassalage, and to pay him an annual tribute of one hundred and fifty thousand maravedis. These conditions were accepted, and by remaining always faithful to King Ferdinand he transmitted his kingdom to his posterity. The rich and strong city of Seville, after the death of its king Abenhut, had formed itself into a republic when King Ferdinand resolved to turn his forces against that place, far the most important which the Moors at that time possessed in Spain. The death of Archbishop Rodriguez, his most faithful minister, followed by that of Berangera, his mother, interrupted his preparations for a short time; but motives of religion moderating his grief for the loss of the best of mothers, he had no sooner settled the administration by the orders which he dispatched into Castile than he resumed his expedition with greater vigour than ever. The siege held sixteen months, Seville being then the largest and strongest city in Spain. Its double walls were very broad and high, and defended by one hundred and sixty-six towers; the western side of the city was secured by the great river Guadalquivir, besides a deep, broad moat at the foot of the innermost wall round the city. All provisions were abundantly supplied from the famous garden of Hercules, esteemed by the ancients the most delightful spot of ground in the world, called by the Moors, Axarafa. This territory is about thirty miles in length and twelve in breadth, and contained one hundred thousand farms, besides castles and towns. It lay on the right side of the river, where its communication with the city was secured by the Castle of Triana on that

bank, which was joined by a great iron chain and a bridge of boats with the golden tower on the opposite bank, at the bottom of the city. St Ferdinand's fleet defeated that of the Moors and mounted the river within sight of the Castle of Triana; his land forces vanquished the succours sent from Africa, and in daily combats gained continual advantages. Yet the siege was not advanced till, in the tenth month, on the feast of the Invention of the Cross, in May, Ferdinand's admiral, by launching two great ships upon the chain and bridge of boats, broke both. Triana was then besieged and, after having been long battered with rams and other engines and stood many assaults, was at length reduced. The city itself surrendered on the 23rd of November 1249; the Moors were allowed a month to sell or dispose of their goods; three hundred thousand removed to Xeres, one hundred thousand passed into Africa. Axataf, Governor-general of the Moors at Seville, being arrived at a hill called Belvidere from which he had a prospect of the sea before him and of the city behind him, turning towards Seville to take his last leave of that city, said with tears that only a saint who by his justice and piety had heaven in his interest in all his undertakings could ever have taken so rich, so populous, and so strong a city with so small an army; but that God, by his eternal decrees, had taken it from the Moors. St Ferdinand, after the most solemn thanksgivings to God, implored the intercession of the Virgin Mother before her famous image, which is still preserved, and refounded the cathedral with such magnificence and splendour that it yielded to no church in Christendom but that of Toledo. The three years which he survived he resided at Seville, to settle the tribunals and regulate the affairs of this important conquest; but added at the same time to his dominions Xeres, Medina, Sidonia, Alcala de los Gazules, Bejar, Port St Mary's, Cadiz, St Lucar, Arcos, Lebrixa, Rota, Trebuxena, and a great number of other towns and castles. He showed by his example that devotion is consistent with the duties of a king and a Christian soldier; he was in all things severe to himself, but compassionate and mild to all others, always master of himself and his passions. He was preparing an expedition against the Moors in Africa when he was taken with his last sickness. He prepared himself for death by the most edifying sentiments of compunction and a general confession; then called for the viaticum; and whilst the Bishop of Segovia, attended by all the clergy of Seville and the court, brought the holy sacrament, the king rose from his bed, fell on his knees on the floor, put a cord about his neck, and taking a crucifix in his hands, kissed and saluted the wounds of his Saviour, watering each of them with his tears. He then made his confession aloud, though he had nothing to accuse himself of which others could think to have been criminal, how much soever he was himself penetrated with confusion and regret for the least appearance of a fault. He made an

act of faith in presence of the holy sacrament, which he received pouring forth a flood of tears of tender love and devotion. Before his death he called for all his children, gave them excellent instructions with his blessing, and asked pardon of all the world if ever he had given offence to any. In his agony, holding a blessed taper in his hands, he recommended his soul to God through the merits of his crucified Redeemer in the most pathetic aspirations; then caused the clergy to recite near him the Litanies, and afterwards the *Te Deum*. This was scarce finished when he calmly yielded up his soul into the hands of his Creator on the 30th of May, in the year 1252, the fifty-third of his age, the thirty-fifth of his reign in Castile and the twenty-second in Leon. According to his desire, he was buried before the image of Our Lady in the great church at Seville, and his body is still preserved in that church, in a rich shrine, without the least blemish of corruption, and has been honoured with miracles. St Ferdinand was canonized by Clement X in 1671. See the Chronicles of Rodriguez Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo, High Chancellor of Castile and minister to St Ferdinand. This work ends in the year 1243, the twenty-sixth of St Ferdinand's reign.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 30 :*

ST FELIX I, Pope and martyr, succeeded St Dionysius in 269: ST FERDINAND III, King of Castile: ST JOAN OF ARC: ST MAGUIL or MADELGISILUS, a recluse in Picardy said to have been the inseparable companion of St Fursey: BLESSED THOMAS COTTAM, English martyr: ST WALSTAN, formerly much honoured in two villages near Norwich: ST JOHN NEPOMUCEN, martyred for refusing to disclose the secrets of the confessional, is honoured in the dioceses of England on this date.

## MAY 31

### ST PETRONILLA, VIRGIN

AMONG the disciples of the apostles in the primitive age of saints, this holy virgin shone as a bright star in the church. She lived when Christians were more solicitous to live well than to write much: they knew how to die for Christ, but did not compile long books or disputations,<sup>1</sup> in which vanity has often a greater share than charity. Hence no particular account of her actions hath been transmitted down to us. But how eminent her sanctity was we may judge from the lustre by which it was distinguished among apostles, prophets, and martyrs. Her name is the feminine and diminutive of Peter, and she is said to have been a daughter of the Apostle Peter, which tradition is confirmed by certain writings quoted by the Manichees in the time of St Austin,<sup>2</sup> which affirm that St Peter had a daughter whom he cured of a palsy. That St Peter was married before his vocation to the apostleship we learn from the gospel; though St Jerom and other ancient fathers testify that he lived in continency

<sup>1</sup> *Sciebant mori, non sciebant disputare.*—*St Cypr.*

<sup>2</sup> St Aug. 1, *Contra Adimant*, c. 17.



after his call. St Clement of Alexandria assures us<sup>1</sup> that his wife attained to the glory of martyrdom; at which that apostle himself encouraged her, bidding her to remember our Lord. But it seems not certain whether St Petronilla was more than the spiritual daughter of that apostle. She flourished at Rome, and was buried on the way to Ardea, where anciently a cemetery and a church bore her name, so famous that in it a station or place for the assembly of the city in public prayer was established by Gregory III. She is commemorated in the true Martyrology of Bede, in those which bear the name of St Jerom, &c.

The saints, whether in sickness or in health, in public or in private life, devoted all their thoughts and actions to God and thus sanctified all their employments. The great end for which they lived was always present to their minds, and they thought every moment lost in which they did not make some advances towards eternal bliss. How will their example condemn at the last day the trifling fooleries, and the greatest part of the conversation and employments of the world, which aim at nothing but present amusements, as if it were the business of a rational creature to divert his mind from thought and reflection and forget the only affair—the business of eternity.

*The following feasts are celebrated on May 31 :*

ST ANGELA MERICI, virgin, founder of the Ursulines : ST CANTIUS and ST CANTIANUS, and their sister ST CANTIANILLA, martyred together with PROTUS, their pious Christian teacher, in 304, for refusing to conform to the orders of the emperor Diocletian by worshipping the gods : ST GABRIEL POSSENTI, C.P. : and ST PETRONILLA, virgin.

---

<sup>1</sup> Strom. lib. vii. p. 736.

JUNE 1  
ST PAMPHILUS, PRIEST AND MARTYR  
(A.D. 309)

[From Eusebius, St Jerom, &c. See Jeillier, t. iii. p. 435.]

LEARNING is truly valuable when sanctified by piety and consecrated to the divine honour, to which St Pamphilus devoted himself and all his labours. He was of a rich and honourable family and a native of Berytus; in which city, at that time famous for its schools, he in his youth ran through the whole circle of the sciences, and was afterwards honoured with the first employments of the magistracy. After he began to know Christ, he could relish no other study but that of salvation, and renounced everything else that he might apply himself wholly to the exercises of virtue and the studies of the holy scriptures. This accomplished master in profane sciences and this renowned magistrate was not ashamed to become the humble scholar of Pierius, the successor of Origen in the great catechetical school of Alexandria. He afterwards made Cæsarea in Palestine his residence, where at his private expense he collected a great library, which he bestowed on the church of that city. St Isidore of Seville reckons that it contained near thirty thousand volumes. Almost all the works of the ancients were found in it. The saint established there also a public school of sacred literature, and to his labours the church was indebted for a most correct edition of the holy Bible, which with infinite care he transcribed himself, many copies whereof he distributed gratis; for he was of all men the most communicative and beneficent, especially in encouraging sacred learning. He set a great value on the works of Origen, many of which he copied with his own hand. During his imprisonment he, with Eusebius, composed an Apology for Origen in five books; of which the first, in Rufinus's Latin translation, is extant among the works of St Jerom, and is a finished piece. But nothing was more remarkable in this saint than his extraordinary humility, as Eusebius often observes; which the saint himself feelingly expresses in his preface to an abridgement of the Acts of the Apostles. His paternal estate he at length distributed among the poor; towards his slaves and domestics his behaviour was always that of a brother or a tender father. He led a most austere life, sequestered from the world and its company; and was indefatigable in labour. Such a virtue was his apprenticeship to the grace of martyrdom.

In the year 307 Urbanus, the cruel governor of Palestine, caused him to be apprehended, and after hearing an essay of his eloquence and erudition, commanded him to be most inhumanly tormented. But the iron hooks which tore the martyr's sides served only to cover the judge with confusion. After this the saint remained almost two years in prison with several fellow-confessors, of whom two, who were only catechumens, were at the same time purified and crowned by the baptism of fire. Soon after the torturing of St Pamphilus, Urbanus, the governor, was himself beheaded by an order of the Emperor Maximinus; but was succeeded by Firmilian, a man not less barbarous than bigoted and superstitious. After several butcheries, he caused St Pamphilus and Valens, Deacon of the Church of Jerusalem, a venerable old man who could repeat the whole Bible by heart, and Paul of Jamnia, a man of extraordinary zeal and fervour, to be brought before him: and finding them still firm in their faith, without putting them again to the rack, passed sentence of death upon them, yet several others suffered before them. For one, Porphyrius, a virtuous slave of St Pamphilus, whom the saint had always treated as a son and who, out of humility, concealed his abilities and his skill in writing, asked the judge's leave to bury their bodies when they should have undergone their punishment. Firmilian, more like a tiger than a man, inquired if he was a Christian, and upon his confessing it, ordered the executioners to torment him with their utmost strength. But though his flesh was torn off to the very bones, and his naked bowels exposed to view and the torments were continued a long time without intermission, he never once opened his mouth so much as to fetch one groan. He finished his martyrdom by a slow fire and died invoking Jesus the Son of God. Thus, though he entered the list after the rest, he arrived first at the crown. Seleucus, a Cappadocian, for carrying the news of the triumph of Porphyrius to St Pamphilus and for applauding the martyr's constancy, was condemned to be beheaded with the rest. He had formerly borne several employments in the army and had been scourged for the faith in 298; after which time he had lived a father and protector of the poor. Firmilian had in his family a servant named Theodulus, whom he loved above all the rest of his domestics for his probity and virtue; but being informed that he was a Christian and had embraced one of the martyrs, he condemned him to be crucified on the same day. Julian, a zealous Cappadocian catechumen, for embracing the dead bodies of the martyrs in the evening, was burnt at a slow fire, as Porphyrius had been. St Pamphilus, with his companions above named, was beheaded on the 16th of February 309; the others here mentioned all suffered on the same day. The bodies of these martyrs were left exposed to be devoured by wild beasts; but were not touched by them, and after four days were taken away and decently buried. Eusebius of Cæsarea, the church historian, who had been fellow-prisoner

with St Pamphilus, out of respect to his memory took the surname of Pamphili. Besides what he has said of this martyr in his history, he compiled three books of his life which are much commended by St Jerom, who calls them elegant, and says that in them he excellently set forth the virtues, especially the extraordinary humility, of St Pamphilus. But this work is now lost, though Metaphrastes seems to have borrowed from it his account of this saint.

A cloud of witnesses, a noble army of martyrs, by which we are encompassed, teach us by their constancy to suffer wrong with patience and strenuously to resist evil. Yet so far are we from bearing the crown which is purchased by patience and constancy, and so slothful in watching over ourselves, that we every day suffer the least dust or flies to ruffle our souls and rob us of our treasure. The daily trials we meet with from others or from ourselves are always sent us by God, who sometimes, like a tender parent, trains us up by strict discipline to virtue and glory; sometimes throws difficulties into our way on purpose to reward our conquest; and sometimes, like a wise physician, restores us to our health by bitter potions. If he at any time punishes our contempt of his love and mercy by severity and chastisements, even these he inflicts in mercy to awake us from our dangerous spiritual lethargy and to procure us many other spiritual advantages.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 1 :*

ST CAPRAIS, Abbot, the spiritual guide of St Honoratus; he died soon after him, in the Isle of Lerins, 430 : BLESSED JOHN STOREY, Chancellor of the Dioceses of London and Oxford under Queen Mary, martyr : ST JUSTIN, the philosopher : ST PAMPHILUS, priest and martyr, "who sanctified learning by piety and consecrated both to the Divine honour" : ST PETER OF PISA, founder of the Hermits of St Jerome : and ST WISTAN, martyr, Prince of Mercia, killed by a rival claimant to his father's throne.

## JUNE 2

SAINTS POTHINUS (BISHOP), SANCTUS, ATTALUS, BLANDINA, AND THE OTHER MARTYRS OF LYONS

(A.D. 177)

[From the Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia, extant though imperfect, in Eusebius's Hist. b. v. c. 1, 2, 3, one of the most precious and most moving monuments of the primitive ages, as Jos. Scaliger observes, in his notes on the Chronicle of Eusebius.]

AFTER the miraculous victory obtained by the prayers of the Christians under Marcus Aurelius in 174, the church enjoyed a kind of peace, though it was often disturbed in particular places by popular commotions or by superstitious fury of certain governors. This appears from the violent persecution which was raised three years after the aforesaid victory, at Vienne and Lyons, in Gaul, in 177, whilst St Pothinus was Bishop of Lyons, and St Irenæus, who had been sent thither by St Polycarp out of

Asia,<sup>1</sup> was a priest of that city. Many of the principal persons of this church were Greeks and came from Asia; being doubtless led by a zealous desire to propagate the kingdom of Christ, and invited by the great intercourse of traffic between the ports of Asia and Marseilles. The progress which the gospel had made, and the eminent sanctity of those who professed it in that country, enraged the devil and stirred up the malice of the idolaters who, in a transport of sudden fury, resolved to extirpate their very name; not knowing that the Church of Christ, planted by his cross, grew more fruitful by the sufferings of its children as a vine flourishes by being pruned. The conflicts of the glorious martyrs who on this occasion had the honour to seal their faith with their blood were recorded by those who were eye-witnesses and the companions of their sufferings, in a letter written by them on purpose to their old friends and brethren, the Christians of Asia and Phrygia. The piety, eloquence, and animated style of this epistle seems to leave no doubt but that St Irenæus was the principal author.<sup>2</sup> According to the remark of a modern historian,<sup>3</sup> the combats of the martyrs are here painted in so lively colours that their spirit appears as it were living in the dead letter, and their blood spilt for Jesus Christ seems to shine throughout the relation.

It is impossible, say the authors of this letter, for us to give an exact account, nor will it be easy to conceive the extent of our present calamities, the rage of the pagans against the saints, and the sufferings of the holy martyrs among us. For the adversary directs his whole force against us, and lets us see already what we are to expect when he is let loose and allowed to attack the church in the end of the world. He makes his assaults boldly and stirs up his agents against the servants of God. Their animosity runs so high that we are not only driven from private houses, from the baths and public places, but even forbid to show ourselves at all. But the grace of God, which is an overmatch for all the powers of hell, hath rescued the weak from the danger and from the temptation of the fiery trial, and exposed such only to the combat as are able by an invincible patience to stand their ground, like so many unshaken pillars of the faith, and dare even invite sufferings, and defy all the malice and strength of the enemy. These champions have fought the powers of darkness with success, bore all manner of infamy and the most inhuman torments, looked on all their sufferings as nothing, but rushed through them with an intrepidity that spoke them thoroughly persuaded that all the miseries of this life are not fit to be allowed any consideration when weighed against the glory of the world to come. At first the people attacked them in a tumultuous manner, struck them, dragged them about the streets, threw stones at them, plundered, confined them, fell on them with all the exorbitancies of an

<sup>1</sup> St Greg. Turon. lib. i.; Hist. France, c. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Vales, Not. ad. lib. v.; Euseb. Tillem. t. iii. p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Du Bosquet, lib. ii.; Hist. Eccles. c. 13.

incensed mob when allowed to take their own revenge of their enemies; all which the Christians bore with an inexpressible patience. After this first discharge of their rage they proceeded more regularly. The tribune and the magistrates of the town ordered them to appear in the public place, where they were examined before the populace, made a glorious confession of their faith, and then were sent to prison, where they were to wait the arrival of the governor. When that judge came to town, they were carried before him, and used with so much cruelty that Vettius Epagathus, one of our number, fired with a holy resentment at our treatment, desired to be heard on that subject. He was full of the love of God and his neighbour; a man so exactly virtuous that, though young, the character of old Zacharias might justly be applied to him; for he walked in all the commandments blameless. His heart was inflamed with an ardent zeal for the glory of God; and he was active and indefatigable whenever his neighbour wanted his assistance. This excellent person undertook the defence of the injured brethren, and promised to make it appear that the Christians were guilty of no impious practices. But the whole crowd, who were too well acquainted with his merit, opposed the motion in a noisy and tumultuous manner; and the governor, determined not to grant him that reasonable request, which impeached him and his associates for injustice, interrupted him by asking whether he was a Christian. Upon his declaring his faith boldly, he was ranked among the martyrs, with the additional title of The Advocate of the Christians, which, indeed, was justly his due. And now it was easy to distinguish between such as came thither well provided for the trial and resolved to suffer all extremities, and such as were not prepared for the battle. The former finished their glorious course with the utmost alacrity; while the latter started back at the near view of what was prepared for them upon persevering in the faith and quitted the field, which was the case of ten persons. Their cowardice and apostasy not only proved an inexpressible affliction to us, but also cooled the zeal of several who were not yet apprehended and had employed their liberty in a constant attendance on the martyrs, in spite of all the dangers to which their charity might expose them. We were all now in the utmost consternation, which did not arise from the fear of torments, but the apprehension of losing more of our number in the way. But our late loss was abundantly repaired by fresh supplies of generous martyrs who were seized every day till our two churches were deprived of all their eminent men, whom we had been used to look on as the main support of religion among us.

As the governor's orders for letting none of us escape were very strict, several pagans in the service of the Christians were taken with their masters. These slaves, fearing they should be put to the same torments

which they saw the saints endure, at the instigation of the devil and the soldiers accused us of feeding on human flesh, like Thyestes, engaging in incestuous marriages, like Œdipus, and several other impious extravagances which the principles of our religion forbid us to mention or even think of, and which we can hardly persuade ourselves were ever committed by men. These calumnies being divulged, the people were so outrageously incensed against us that they who till then had retained some sparks of friendship for us were transported against us with hatred and foamed with rage. It is impossible to express the severity of what the ministers of Satan inflicted on the holy martyrs on this occasion to force some blasphemous expression from their mouths. The fury of the governor, the soldiers, and the people fell most heavy upon Sanctus, a native of Vienne and a deacon; also on Maturus who, though but lately baptized, was yet bold and strong enough for the combat; on Attalus, a native of Pergamus, but who had ever been the pillar and support of our church; and on Blandina, a slave, in whom Christ has shown us that those whom men look on with contempt and whose condition places them below the regard of the world are often raised to the highest honours by Almighty God for their ardent love of him, manifested more by works than words or empty show. She was of so weak a constitution that we were all alarmed for her, and her mistress, one of the martyrs, was full of apprehensions that she would not have the courage and resolution to make a free and open confession of her faith. But Blandina was so powerfully assisted and strengthened that she bore all the torments her executioners, who relieved each other, could ply her with from break of day till night; they owned themselves conquered, protested they had no more torments in reserve, and wondered how she could live after what she had endured from their hands; declaring that they were of opinion that any one of the torments inflicted on her would have been sufficient to dispatch her, according to the common course of nature, instead of the many violent ones she had undergone. But that blessed person, like a valiant combatant, received fresh strength and vigour from the confession of her faith. The frequent repetition of these words: "I am a Christian; no wickedness is transacted among us" took off the edge of her pains and made her appear insensible to all she suffered.

The deacon Sanctus, too, endured most exquisite torments with more than human patience. The heathens, indeed, hoped these severities would at last force some unbecoming expressions from him; but he bore up against their attacks with such resolution and strength of mind that he would not so much as tell them his name, his country, or station in the world; and to every question they put to him he answered in Latin, "I am a Christian"; nor could they get any other answer from him. The governor and the persons employed in tormenting the martyr were

highly incensed at this; and having already tried all other arts of cruelty, they applied hot plates of brass to the tenderest parts of his body: but, supported by the powerful grace of God, he still persisted in the profession of his faith. His body was so covered with wounds and bruises that the very figure of it was lost. Christ, who suffered in him, made him a glorious instrument for conquering the adversary, and a standing proof to others that there is no ground for fear where the love of the Father dwells; nor is there anything that deserves the name of pain where the glory of Christ is concerned. Some days after, the martyr was brought on the stage again; for the pagans imagined that, his whole body being so sore and inflamed that he could not bear to be touched, it would now be an easy matter to overcome him by a repetition of the same cruelties; or, at least, that he must expire under their hands and thus strike a horror into the other Christians. But they succeeded in neither of these views; for, to the amazement of all, his body under the latter torments recovered its former strength and shape, and the exact use of all his limbs was restored; so that by this miracle of the grace of Jesus Christ what was designed as an additional pain proved an absolute and effectual cure.

The devil thought himself secure of Biblis, one of the unhappy persons who had renounced the faith; and desirous to enhance her guilt and punishment by a false impeachment, caused her to be arraigned, believing it would be no hard matter to bring one so weak and timorous to accuse us of impieties. But the force of the torments had a very different effect upon her: they awakened her, as it were, out of a profound sleep; and those transitory pains turned her thoughts upon the everlasting torments of hell. So that, contrary to what was expected of her, she broke out into the following expostulation: "How can it be imagined that they should feed upon children whose religion forbids them even to taste the blood of beasts?"<sup>1</sup> From that moment she publicly confessed herself a Christian and was ranked amongst the martyrs. The most violent torments being thus rendered ineffectual by the patience of the martyrs and the power of Jesus Christ, the devil had recourse to other devices. They were thrown into a dark and loathsome dungeon, had their feet cramped in wooden stocks and extended to the fifth or last hole; and all those severities exercised upon them which are commonly practised by the enraged ministers of darkness upon their prisoners; so great that numbers of them died of the hardships they endured there. Others, after having been so inhumanly tortured that one would have thought all the care imaginable could not have recovered them, lay there destitute of all human succour, but so strongly supported from above, both in mind and body, that they comforted and encouraged the rest: whilst others but lately apprehended,

<sup>1</sup> These Christians still observed the law of abstaining from eating blood, enacted by the apostles.—Acts xv. 20.



and who had as yet undergone no torments, soon died, unable to bear the loathsomeness of the prison.

Among the persons that suffered for their faith on this occasion was the blessed Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons. He was then above ninety years old, and so weak and infirm that he could hardly breathe. But his ardent desire of laying down his life for Jesus Christ gave him fresh strength and vigour. He was dragged before the tribunal; for, though his body was worn out with age and infirmity, his life was preserved till that time that Jesus Christ might triumph in him. He was brought thither by the soldiers and magistrates of the city, the whole multitude hallooing after and reviling him with as much eagerness and rage as if he had been Christ himself. Being asked by the governor who was the God of the Christians, Pothinus told him, to prevent his blaspheming, he should know when he was worthy of that satisfaction. Upon which he was dragged about unmercifully and inhumanly abused. Those who were near him kicked and struck him without any regard to his venerable age; and those who were at some distance pelted him with what first came to hand, imagining the least tenderness or regard for him would have been an enormous crime when the honour of their gods was so nearly concerned, which they endeavoured to assert by insulting the martyr. He was scarce alive when he was carried off and thrown into prison, where he expired after two days' confinement.

Those who had denied their faith when first taken were imprisoned too, and shared the same sufferings with the martyrs, for their apostasy at that time did them no service. But then there was this difference between their condition, that those who had generously owned their religion were confined only as Christians and no other crime alleged against them; but the perfidious wretches were imprisoned like murderers and criminals, and thus suffered much more than the martyrs, who were comforted with the joyful prospect of laying down their lives in that glorious cause, and supported by the divine promises, the love of Jesus Christ, and the spirit of their heavenly Father; while the apostates were tortured with the remorse of conscience. They were distinguished from the others by their very looks: when the martyrs appeared it was easy to discover a lovely mixture of cheerfulness and majesty in their faces; their very chains appeared graceful and seemed more like the ornaments of a bride than the marks of malefactors; and their bodies sent forth such an agreeable and pleasant savour as gave occasion to think that they used perfumes. But those who had basely deserted the cause of Christ appeared melancholy, dejected, and completely disagreeable. The very pagans reproached them with faint-heartedness and effeminacy for renouncing their principle (the honourable, glorious, and salutary name of Christian), their former profession whereof had ranked them with murderers, an imputation they,

by their apostasy, had justly incurred. This sight had a happy influence on several, strengthened them in their profession, and defeated all the attempts the devil could make on their constancy and courage. After this, a great variety of torments was allotted to the martyrs; and thus they offered to the eternal Father a sort of chaplet, or crown, composed of every kind of flowers of different colours; for it was fit that these courageous champions, who gained such glorious victories in so great a variety of engagements, should receive the crown of immortality. A day was set when the public was to be entertained at the expense of their lives, and Maturus, Sanctus, Blandina, and Attalus were brought out in order to be thrown to the beasts for the barbarous diversion of the heathens. Maturus and Sanctus, being conducted into the amphitheatre, were made to pass through the same torments as if they had not before felt the force of them, and looked like champions who had worsted the adversary several times and were just entering on the last trial of their skill and courage. Again they felt the scourges and were dragged about by the beasts as before; and, in a word, they suffered every torment the incensed multitude were pleased to call for; who all joined at last in requiring they should be put into the red-hot iron chair, which was granted; nor did the noisome smell of their roasted flesh, offensive as it was, any way abate, but seemed rather to enhance, their rage. They could extort nothing more from Sanctus than his former confession: and he and Maturus, after a long struggle, had their throats cut; and this their victory was the only entertainment that day.

Blandina was fastened to a post to be devoured by beasts: as her arms were stretched out in the ardour of her prayer, that very posture put the faithful in mind of the sufferings of him who was crucified for their salvation, gave them fresh courage, and assured them that whoever suffers for Jesus Christ shall partake of the glory of the living God. After she had remained thus exposed for some time and none of the beasts could be provoked to touch her, she was untied, carried back to prison, and reserved for another combat, in which she was to gain a complete victory over her malicious adversary, the devil (whom she had already foiled and discomfited on several occasions), and to animate the brethren to the battle by her example. Accordingly, though she was a poor, weak, inconsiderable slave, yet by putting on Christ she became an overmatch for all the art and malice of her enemy and, by a glorious conflict, attained to the crown of immortality.

Attalus was called for next, as a noted person, and the people were very loud in their demands to see him suffer; who, being one that had always borne a glorious character among us for his excellent life and courage in asserting the truth, boldly entered the field of battle. He was led round the amphitheatre, and this inscription in Latin carried before him: "This is Attalus, the Christian." The whole company was ready

to discharge their rage on the martyr when the governor, understanding he was a Roman citizen, remanded him to prison and wrote to the emperor to know his pleasure concerning him and the rest of the prisoners. During their reprieve they gave extraordinary proofs of charity and humility. Notwithstanding such a variety of sufferings for the faith, they would by no means allow us to call them martyrs; and severely reprimanded any of us who, in writing or speaking, gave them that title; which, according to their humble way of reasoning, was due only to Jesus Christ, the faithful and true martyr or witness—the first-born of the dead and the guide to eternal life; or, at most, could only be extended to such as were freed from the prison of the body. These indeed, said they, may be termed martyrs, because Christ has sealed them by a glorious death; but we are yet no more than confessors of a mean rank. They then besought the brethren, with tears, to offer up assiduous prayers for their persevering to the end. But, though they refused the title of martyr, yet every action of theirs was expressive of the power of martyrdom, particularly their meekness, their patience, and the intrepid freedom with which they spoke to the heathens and which showed them to be void of fear and in a readiness to suffer anything it was in the power of their enemies to inflict. They humbled themselves at the same time under the powerful hand of God, who hath since raised them to the highest glory, excusing everybody, accusing none; and, like that great proto-martyr, St Stephen, praying for their persecutors. But their chief concern, on the motive of sincere charity, was how to rescue those unhappy persons from the jaws of the devil whom that infernal serpent reckoned he had as good as swallowed up. Far from insulting over the lapsed, or valuing themselves upon the comparison, they freely administered to their spiritual wants, out of their abundance, the rich graces with which God had favoured and distinguished them, expressing the tenderness of a mother for them and shedding floods of tears before their heavenly Father for their salvation. Thus they asked for life, and it was granted them, so that their brethren partook of it; for their endeavours were so successful and their discourse and behaviour so persuasive that the church had the pleasure of seeing several of her children recover new life, ready to make a generous confession of the sacred name they had renounced, and even offer themselves to the trial.

Among the martyrs there was one Alcibiades, who had long been used to a very austere life and to live entirely on bread and water. He seemed resolved to continue this practice during his confinement; but Attalus, after his first combat in the amphitheatre, understood by a revelation that Alcibiades gave occasion of offence to others by seeming to favour the new sect of the Montanists, who endeavoured to recommend themselves by their extraordinary austerities. Alcibiades listened to the admonition, and from that time he ate of everything with thanksgiving to God, who

did not fail to visit his servants with his grace, and the Holy Ghost was their guide and counsellor. In the meantime the emperor's answer arrived, directing the execution of all who persisted in their confession and discharging those who had recanted. The governor took the opportunity of a public festival among the pagans, which drew vast crowds from all parts; and ordered the martyrs to be brought before him with a design of entertaining the people with the sight of their sufferings. After a re-examination of them, finding them resolute he sentenced such of them as were Roman citizens to lose their heads and ordered the rest to be thrown to wild beasts. And now the glory of Jesus Christ was magnified in the unexpected confession of such as had before denied their faith. Those weak persons were examined apart with a view of giving them their liberty; but upon their declaring themselves Christians they were sentenced to suffer with the other martyrs. Some indeed still continued in their apostasy, but then they were only such as never had the least trace of true faith nor any regard for the wedding garment; strangers to the fear of God who, by their way of living, had cast a scandal on the religion they professed and who may justly be styled sons of perdition.

Alexander, a Phrygian by birth and a physician by profession, was present when the apostates were brought this second time before the governor. He had lived many years in Gaul and was universally remarkable for his love of God and his freedom in publishing the gospel; for he was full of an apostolical spirit. This man being near the tribunal at that critical moment, he made several signs with his eyes and head to exhort them to confess Jesus Christ with as much agitation as a woman in labour; so that it was impossible he should pass unobserved. The heathens, exasperated to see those confess who had recanted, clamoured against Alexander as the author of this change. Upon which the governor, turning towards him, asked him who and what he was. Alexander answered he was a Christian, which so enraged the governor that, without any further inquiry, he condemned him to be thrown to the wild beasts. Accordingly, the next day, he was conducted into the arena with Attalus, whom the governor, to oblige the people, had delivered up a second time to the same punishment. Having undergone all the various torments usually inflicted in the amphitheatre, they were dispatched with the sword. Alexander was not heard to sigh or make the least complaint, conversing only with God in his heart. When Attalus was placed in the iron chair, and the broiling of his body exhaled an offensive smell, he turned to the people and said to them in Latin, "This may, with some justice, be called devouring men, and thus you are guilty of that inhuman act; but we are neither guilty of this nor any other abominable practice we are accused of." Being asked what was the name of his God, he replied, "God has not a name like us mortals."

On the last day of the combats of the gladiators, Blandina and Ponticus, a lad not above fifteen years old, were brought into the amphitheatre. They had been obliged to attend the execution of the martyrs every day and were now urged to swear by the idols. Upon their absolutely refusing to comply with the demand and expressing a thorough contempt of their pretended gods, the people gave a free loose to their rage; and without any regard either to Ponticus's youth or the sex of Blandina, employed all the different sorts of torments upon them, pressing them from time to time, but in vain, to swear by the idols. Ponticus, encouraged by his companion, went through all the stages of his martyrdom with great alacrity and died gloriously. Blandina was the last that suffered. She had acted like a mother, animated the other martyrs like so many favourite children, sent them victorious to the heavenly King; and then, passing through the same trials, hastened after them with joy. She was scourged, torn by beasts, put into the burning chair, afterwards wrapt in a net, and exposed to a wild bull that tossed and gored her a long time. But her close conversation with Christ in prayer, and the lively hopes she had of the good things of the other life, made her insensible to all these attacks on her body; and she too had her throat cut. The heathens themselves could not but wonder at her patience and courage, and own that among them no woman had ever been known to have gone through such a course of sufferings.

Not content with the death of the martyrs, that savage and barbarous people, spurred on by the infernal beast, raised a new persecution against their dead bodies. Those who died in prison were thrown to the dogs, and a strict guard kept day and night to prevent our carrying them off. The remains of the other martyrs, such as the beasts or the fire had spared, their scattered half-burnt limbs, the heads and trunks, were carefully laid together and watched by the soldiers several days. Some foamed and gnashed their teeth at the sight of these relics, expressing an eager desire of inflicting more exquisite torments upon them; while others laughed and scoffed at the martyrs, extolling their own idols, ascribing to them the punishment of their enemies. Even those who had behaved themselves with the most moderation and felt some compassion for their sufferings could not forbear reproaching them now by asking, Where is their God? What hath this religion availed them, which they have preferred to life itself? These were the dispositions of the heathens on this occasion, while we were most sensibly afflicted that we could not bury our brethren. The soldiers were always on the guard, not to be gained by entreaty or money, and took as much care to keep the bodies unburied as if, by so doing, they were to have gained some mighty advantage. The martyrs' bodies lay thus exposed six days and then were burnt to ashes and thrown into the Rhone, that no part of them might remain above ground. This they did as if they had been superior to God and could hereby have

prevented the resurrection, the hopes of which, as they observed, had put them upon introducing a new and strange religion, making a mock of the severest torments and meeting death with pleasure. Let us now see, said the heathens, if they will ever return again to life, and whether their God can save them and deliver them out of our hands.

Thus far the incomparable letter of the Christians of Lyons and Vienne, which was inserted entire in Eusebius's account of the martyrs, as he himself assures us. But that piece is lost, and we have no more of this letter than what that author has given us in his Church History. He adds that the churches of Vienne and Lyons subjoined, in the close of this epistle, a religious testimony conformable to holy faith concerning the Montanists. These martyrs suffered in the beginning of the pontificate of Eleutherius, in the seventeenth year of Marcus Aurelius, as Eusebius testifies,<sup>1</sup> and of Christ 177, not 167, as Dodwell pretends. They are called the martyrs of Lyons, because that city was the theatre of their sufferings, though some of them were citizens of Vienne. St Gregory of Tours says they were forty-eight in number, and that part of their ashes were miraculously recovered. These relics were deposited under the altar of the church which anciently bore the name of the Apostles of Lyons.

The fidelity, fervour, and courage of so many saints, of every age and condition, condemn aloud our tepidity and indifference. We profess the same religion and fight for the same cause with the primitive martyrs. Whence comes this monstrous disagreement in our conduct and sentiments? if we do not prefer God and his service to every other consideration—that is, if we are not martyrs in the disposition of our souls—we cannot hoped to be ranked by Christ among his disciples or to inherit his promises. What should we do under greater trials who are unfaithful on the most trifling occasions? What so many followers of our Lord attained to that may we. Their passions and infirmities were the same with ours; our trials and temptations are far less than theirs: we serve the same God, are guided by the same truths, supported by the same power, elevated by the same hopes; we have the same peace bequeathed us, the same spirit, the same heaven promised us, and we march under the conduct of the same Captain.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 2 :*

St ERASMUS, Bishop and martyr, suffered cruel torments under Diocletian, 303 : St MARCELLINUS and St PETER, the former a priest and the latter an exorcist, of Rome : BLESSED MARIA ANNE DE PARADES : and St POTHINUS (Bishop, aged ninety), St SANCTUS, deacon St ATTALUS, St BLANDINA, and the other martyrs of Lyons.

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. Hist. lib. v. c. i.

JUNE 3

## ST CLOTILDIS, OR CLOTILDA, QUEEN OF FRANCE

Was daughter of Chilperic, younger brother to Gondebald, the tyrannical king of Burgundy, who put him, his wife, and the rest of his brothers, except one, to death in order to usurp their dominions. In this massacre he spared Chilperic's two fair daughters, then in their infancy. One of them afterwards became a nun; the other, named Clotildis, was brought up in her uncle's court and, by a singular providence, was instructed in the Catholic religion, though she was educated in the midst of Arians. It was her happiness in the true faith to be inspired from the cradle with a contempt and disgust of a treacherous world, which sentiments she cherished and improved by the most fervent exercises of religion. Though she saw herself surrounded with all the charms of the world and was from her infancy its idol, yet her heart was proof against its seductions. She was adorned with the assemblage of all virtues, and the reputation of her wit, beauty, meekness, modesty, and piety made her the adoration of all the neighbouring kingdoms, when Clovis I, surnamed the Great, the victorious king of the Franks, demanded and obtained her from her uncle in marriage, granting her all the conditions she could desire for the free and secure exercise of her religion.<sup>1</sup> The marriage was solemnized at Soissons in 493. Clotildis made herself a little oratory in the royal palace, in which she spent much time in fervent prayer and secret mortifications. Her devotion was tempered with discretion, so that she attended all her business at court, was watchful over her maids, and did everything with a dignity, order, and piety which edified and charmed the king and his whole court. Her charity to the poor seemed a sea which could never be drained. She honoured her royal husband, studied to sweeten his warlike temper by Christian meekness, conformed herself to his humour in things that were indifferent; and, the better to gain his affections, made those things the subject of her discourse and praises in which she saw him take the greatest delight. When she saw herself mistress of his heart, she did not defer the great work of endeavouring to win him to God, and often spoke to him on the vanity of his idols and on the excellency of the true religion. The king always heard her with pleasure; but the moment of his conversion was not yet come. It was first to cost her many tears, severe trials, and earnest perseverance. After the baptism of their second son Clodomir and the infant's recovery from a dangerous indisposition, she pressed the king more boldly to renounce his idols. One day especially, when he had given her great assurances of his affection and augmented her dowry by a gift of several manors, she said she begged

<sup>1</sup> See on this at length, Du Bos, *Hist. de l'Etablissement de la Monarchie Française*, t. i. lib. i.



SAINT CLOTILDIS

*To face page 592*



only one favour of his majesty, which was the liberty to discourse with him on the sanctity of her religion, and to put him in mind of his promise of forsaking the worship of idols. But the fear of giving offence to his people made him delay the execution. His miraculous victory over the Alemanni and his entire conversion in 496 were at length the fruit of our saint's prayers.

Clotildis having gained to God this great monarch, never ceased to excite him to glorious actions for the divine honour: among other religious foundations he built in Paris, at her request, about the year 511, the great Church of SS. Peter and Paul, now called St Genevieve's. This great prince had a singular devotion to St Martin, and went sometimes to Tours to prostrate himself in prayer at his tomb. He sent his royal diadem, which is called to this day The Realm, a present to Pope Hormisdas as a token that he dedicated his kingdom to God. His barbarous education and martial temper made it, in certain sallies of his passions, difficult for Clotildis to bridle his inclination to ambition and cruelty, so that he scarce left any princes of his own relations living except his sons. He died on the 27th of November in the year 511, of his age the forty-fifth, having reigned thirty years. He was buried in the Church of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul, now called St Genevieve's, where his tomb still remains. An ancient long epitaph which was inscribed on it is preserved by Aimoinus and copied by Rivet. His eldest son Theodoric, whom he had by a concubine before his marriage, reigned at Rheims over Austrasia, or the eastern parts of France, which comprised the present Champagne, Lorraine, Auvergne, and several provinces of Germany. Metz was afterwards the capital of this country. As to the three sons of Clotildis, Clodomir reigned at Orleans, Childebert at Paris, and Clotaire I at Soissons. This division produced wars and mutual jealousies, till in 560 the whole monarchy was reunited under Clotaire, the youngest of these brothers. St Clotildis lived to see Clodomir defeat and put to death Sigismund, King of Burgundy; but soon after, in 524, himself vanquished and slain by Gondemar, successor to Sigismund; Gondemar overcome and killed by Childebert and Clotaire, and the kingdom of Burgundy united to France. The most sensible affliction of this pious queen was the murder of the two eldest sons of Clodomir, committed in 526, by their uncles Childebert and Clotaire, who seized on the kingdom of Orleans. This tragical disaster contributed more perfectly to wean her heart from the world. She spent the remaining part of her life at Tours, near the tomb of St Martin, in exercises of prayer, almsdeeds, watching, fasting, and penance, seeming totally to forget that she had been a queen or that her sons sat on the throne. Eternity filled her heart and employed all her thoughts. She foretold her death thirty days before it happened, having been admonished of it by God at the tomb of St Martin, the usual place

of her tears. In her last illness she sent for her sons, Childebert, King of Paris, and Clotaire, King of Soissons, and exhorted them, in the most pathetic manner, to honour God and keep his commandments; to protect the poor, reign as fathers to their people, live in union together, and love and study always to maintain tranquillity and peace. She scarce ever ceased repeating the psalms with the most tender devotion, and ordered all she had left to be distributed among the poor; though this was very little, for she had always been careful to send her riches before her by their hands. On the thirtieth day of her illness she received the sacraments, made a public confession of her faith, and departed to the Lord on the 3rd of June in 545. She was buried by her own order in the Church of St Genevieve, at the feet of that holy shepherdess, and is commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on the 3rd of June.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 3 :*

ST CECILIUS, "called at an advanced age to the light of Divine wisdom," as he himself testifies : ST CLOTILDIS or CLOTILDA, Queen of France, buried by her own order in the church of St Genevieve and at the feet of that holy shepherdess : ST COBINGEN or KEIVIN, Bishop in Ireland, baptized by St Cronin, died on this date, 618, aged one hundred and twenty years : ST GENESIUS, in French GENES, founded a great hospital at Clermont ; Bishop of Auvergne and of Clermont, 656 : ST LIFARD, Abbot near Orleans, a bright light of the law and a man of probity and piety, who entered the priesthood in his fortieth year ; many churches about Orleans are dedicated to him.

#### JUNE 4

### ST QUIRINUS, BISHOP, MARTYR

(A.D. 304)

[From his original beautiful Acts in Surius and Ruinart ; and from Prudentius, hymn. 7. See Tillemont, t. v. p. 428, and F. Hanciz, Germania Sacra, t. i. p. 38.]

ST QUIRINUS was Bishop of Siscia, a city in Pannonia, situate upon the river Save; which being now reduced to a borough, called Sisek or Sisseg in Hungary, the episcopal see is removed to Zagrab, capital of modern Croatia. St Jerom makes honourable mention of this saint in his Chronicle, upon the year 309. Prudentius calls him an eminent martyr. Fortunatus ranks him among the most illustrious martyrs of the church. He suffered on the 4th of June 303 or 304. His acts give the following account of his triumph.

The holy prelate having intelligence that Maximus, the chief magistrate of the city, had given an order for his apprehension, left the town, but was pursued, taken, and carried before him. Maximus asked him whither he was flying. The martyr answered, "I did not fly, but went away to obey the order of my master.<sup>1</sup> For it is written: 'When they persecute you in one city, fly to another.'" Maximus said, "Who gave you that order?"

<sup>1</sup> By this answer he means that he did not withdraw through cowardice or fear of death, but in compliance with the precept of Christ.

*Quirinus.* "Jesus Christ, who is the true God."

*Maximus.* "Know you not that the emperor's orders would find you out anywhere? Nor can he whom you call the true God help or rescue you when you are fallen into their hands, as you now see to your cost."

*Quir.* "The God whom we adore is always with us wherever we are, and can always help us. He was with me when I was taken, and is now with me. It is he that strengthens me and now answers you by my mouth."

*Max.* "You talk much, and are guilty thereby of delay in executing the commands of our sovereigns. Read their divine edicts and comply with what they enjoin."

*Quir.* "I make no account of such injunctions, because they are impious; and, contrary to God's commandments, would oblige us his servants to offer sacrifice to imaginary divinities. The God whom I serve is everywhere; he is in heaven, on earth, and in the sea. He is above all things, containing everything within himself; and by him alone everything subsists."

Maximus said, "Old age has weakened your understanding, and you are deluded by idle tales. See, here is incense; offer it to the gods, or you will have many affronts to bear and will suffer a cruel death."

*Quir.* "That disgrace I account my glory; and that death will purchase me eternal life. I respect only the altar of my God, on which I have often offered to him a sacrifice of sweet odour."

*Max.* "I perceive you are distracted, and that your madness will be the cause of your death. Sacrifice to the gods."

"No," said Quirinus, "I do not sacrifice to devils."

Maximus then ordered him to be beaten with clubs, and the sentence was executed with great cruelty. The judge said to him under that torment, "Now confess the power of the gods whom the great Roman empire adores. Obey, and I will make you the priest of Jupiter." Quirinus replied, "I am now performing the true function of a priest in offering myself a sacrifice to the living God. I feel not the blows which my body has received; they give me no torment. I am ready to suffer much greater tortures, that they who have been committed to my charge may be encouraged to follow me to eternal life."

Maximus commanded that he should be carried back to prison and loaded with heavy chains till he grew wiser. The martyr in the dungeon made this prayer: "I thank thee, O Lord, that I have borne reproaches for thy sake; and I beseech thee to let those who are in this prison know that I adore the true God, and that there is no other besides thee." Accordingly, at midnight, a great light was seen in the prison, which being perceived by Marcellus the jailer, he threw himself at the feet of St Quirinus and said, with tears, "Pray to the Lord for me; for I believe that there is no other God but him whom you adore." The holy bishop,

after a long exhortation, signed him in the name of Jesus Christ. This expression of the acts seems to imply that he conferred on him the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.

This magistrate, not having authority to put the martyr to death, after three days' imprisonment sent him to Amantius, governor of the province called the First Pannonia. Prudentius calls him Galerius, governor of Illyricum, under which Pannonia was comprised. He had probably both those names, a usual thing at that time among the Romans. The bishop was carried in chains through all the towns that lay on the Danube, till being brought before Amantius, then on his return from Scarabantia, the governor ordered him to be conducted to Sabaria, whither he himself was going. Certain Christian women in the meantime brought him refreshments, which as he was blessing, his chains dropped off from his hands and feet. On his arrival at Sabaria, Amantius ordered him to be brought before him in the public theatre and, having read the records of what had passed between him and Maximus, asked the saint if he owned the truth of the contents, and whether or no he persisted in his former confession of the Christian faith. The saint answered, "I have confessed the true God at Siscia; I have never adored any other. Him I carry in my heart, and no man on earth shall ever be able to separate me from him." Amantius endeavoured to overcome his resolution by large promises and by the consideration of his old age; but finding him inflexible, he sentenced him to be thrown into the river with a millstone at his neck, and his order was obeyed. But to the great astonishment of the spectators (who were assembled in crowds on the banks of the river to behold the execution), the saint, instead of sinking to the bottom, continued a long time above water, with the millstone at his neck, exhorting the Christians to continue steadfast in the faith and to dread neither torments nor death itself. But perceiving that he sank not at all, he began to fear he should lose the crown of martyrdom. He thereupon addressed himself to Christ in these words: "It is not wonderful for thee, O almighty Jesus, to stop the course of rivers as thou didst that of Jordan, nor to make men walk upon the water, as Peter did on the sea, by thy divine power. These people have had a sufficient proof in me of the effect of thy power. Grant me what now remains, and is to be preferred to all things, the happiness of dying for thee, Jesus Christ my God." He soon after sank to the bottom; upon whose death the acts of the martyr make this reflection, "That he with difficulty obtained by his prayers to be drowned." His body was found a little below the place, and laid in a chapel built on the bank. Soon after a great church was erected near the gate of Sabaria, leading to Scarabantia, in which his remains were laid. When, by the inroads of barbarians, the Pannonians were afterwards driven out of their country, the relics of this martyr were carried to Rome and deposited in the cata-

combs of St Sebastian, but removed in 1140 into the Church of St Mary, beyond the Tiber. Molanus proves that they are now kept in a monastery in Bavaria. The river in which St Quirinus was drowned was called Sabarius, now Guntz.

The martyrs are victims of divine love. Their example invites us to shake off all sloth and to devote our whole lives and all our strength to the service of Him who created us for himself alone, till we shall have consummated our sacrifice to the eternal glory of his holy name. Thus we shall attain to our last end and shall find immortal happiness; and shall refer to it all our steps in this mortal life, and all the desires of our hearts.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 4 :*

ST BREACA of Ireland (now BREAGUE), virgin, a disciple of St Patrick : ST BURIAN, an Irish-woman, to honour whose relics King Athelstan built a college which enjoyed the privilege of sanctuary : ST FRANCIS CARACCILO, 1563(?)–1608 : ST NENOOK or NENNOCA, who directed many other holy virgins in the path of sanctity : ST PETROC, in French PERREUSE, a native of Wales; he passed twenty years in Ireland, then went to Rome; returning to Cornwall, he founded a monastery there : ST OPTATUS, an African, Bishop of Milevum, whom St Augustine names with Saints Cyprian and Hilary in that he passed from paganism to the light of faith : ST QUIRINUS : ST WALTER, Abbot, a native of Rome, who early withdrew from the world : and another ST WALTER, an Englishman, thirty-fourth Abbot of Fontenelle and the fortieth saint of that house; he died in 1140.

## JUNE 5

### ST BONIFACE, ARCHBISHOP OF MENTZ, APOSTLE OF GERMANY, AND MARTYR

(A.D. 755)

[From his life, carefully written by St Willibald, his disciple and first Bishop of Achstat; and again, in two books by Othlo, a monk of the twelfth age; also from his Epistles. See Mabillon. t. iii. Annal. p. 447; Fleury, t. ix.; Ceillier, t. xviii. p. 74; Schannat, Historia Fuldensis, anno 1729, and Serarius, Rerum Mogunticarum cum Annotat. et Supplemento a Georgio Christiano Joannis, Francofurti ad Mœnum, 1722, lib. iii. a. p. 251 ad 370.]

ST BONIFACE was born at Crediton, or Kirton, in Devonshire, about the year 680, and at his baptism named Winfrid. When he was but five years old, his chief delight was to hear holy men converse about God and heavenly things. The edifying deportment and holy instructions of certain pious monks who, being employed in preaching in that country, happened to come to his father's house, gave him a strong desire to devote himself to God in a religious state; and though he was then only a child, the deep impressions which their words left upon his heart were never after effaced. His father exerted his whole authority to divert him from his inclination to a monastic life; till being visited by a dangerous sickness, he acknowledged in it the hand of God, chastising him for opposing his son's vocation, which he from that time gave him free leave to pursue. Winfrid was educated from thirteen years of age in the monastery of Escancester, or Exeter, under the holy Abbot Wolphard. With the study of grammar he joined assiduous devout meditation and the most

rigorous observance of monastic discipline, even before he had professed that state, which he embraced before he left the aforesaid monastery. After he had spent there some years, the reputation of the schools and discipline of the monastery of Nutcell,<sup>1</sup> in the diocese of Winchester, under the learned Abbot Winbert, drew him to that house. He made an extraordinary progress in poesy, rhetoric, history, and in the knowledge of the scriptures; and was afterwards appointed by his abbot to teach the same sciences, of which duty he acquitted himself with great fruit to others, at the same time improving himself in the sciences with that redoubled advantage which maturity of years and judgment, and a diligent review of a well-digested course of former studies, give to masters of an elevated genius. At thirty years of age he was promoted to the order of priesthood; and from that time was chiefly employed in preaching the word of God to the people and in the care of souls. Such was his reputation that he was intrusted by his superiors with an important commission to Brithwald, Archbishop of Canterbury, by which means that prelate and the religious King Ina became acquainted with his extraordinary merit; and the bishops of the province from that time invited him to their synods, that they might be assisted by his learning and advice in their deliberations.

The servant of God, burning with zeal for the divine honour and the salvation of souls, never ceased to bewail, night and day, the misfortune of those nations which lay benighted in the shades of idolatry. In these holy dispositions, after having long implored the light and blessing of heaven, he, with the leave of his abbot, passed over into Friseland to preach the gospel to the infidels in 716. But for the trial of his virtue, a war breaking out between Charles Martel, mayor of the French palace, and Radbod, King of Friseland, threw insuperable difficulties in his way. However, he advanced as far as Utrecht, then the capital city of that country, and addressed himself to King Radbod, but without success; and he was obliged to return to his monastery in England. Winbert dying soon after, Winfrid was unanimously chosen abbot. He did all that lay in his power to decline this promotion, alleging that he was called to the conversion of infidels. Though he was not able then to prevail, he shortly after urged the same motive with such success as to engage Daniel, the learned and pious Bishop of Winchester, to procure that his demission should be accepted and another nominated abbot in his place.

After having stayed two years in England, he set out for Rome in 719 and presented himself to Pope Gregory II, begging his apostolic blessing and authority that he might preach the faith to infidels. The pope, fixing his eyes upon him, asked him if he brought with him commendatory letters from his diocesan. Hereupon Winfrid delivered into his hands

<sup>1</sup> This monastery was afterwards destroyed by the Danes and never rebuilt.

letters from the aforesaid Bishop Daniel, by which he was strongly recommended to his holiness. Gregory having read them, and conversed some time with the saint, began to treat him with extraordinary marks of kindness and esteem, and gave him an ample commission to preach the faith to all the infidel nations of Germany. He bestowed on him many holy relics, and dismissed him with his blessing and letters of recommendation to all Christian princes on his way. The holy missionary lost no time, but taking the road to Germany, crossed the Lower Alps, and travelling through Bavaria into Thuringia, there began his apostolical functions. He not only baptized great numbers of infidels, but also brought the Christians he found already established in Bavaria and in the provinces adjoining to France (especially the priests and bishops) to reform many irregularities and to live in a manner agreeable to the precepts of the gospel and the holy canons of the church; for the commerce of the heathens had almost extinguished in them the sense of the pure maxims of their faith. Winfrid hearing soon after that, by the death of Radbod, Charles Martel was become master of Friseland, and that a door was there opened for the preaching of the gospel, he hastened thither and during three years joined his labours with St Willebrord, to the great increase of the faith; till, understanding that St Willebrord intended to make him his successor in the episcopal charge, he was alarmed and left that mission. For his excuse he alleged that the pope had enjoined him a commission to preach the gospel to the heathens in Germany. From Friseland he went into Hesse and part of Saxony; and wherever he came, baptized many thousands of idolaters, destroyed temples, and built churches. He acquainted Pope Gregory with this wonderful success by a letter which he sent by one of his fellow-labourers, and at the same time consulted his holiness upon several difficulties that occurred in his ministry. The pope gave glory to God and congratulated him by a letter, in which he commanded him to repair to Rome. Winfrid immediately obeyed the order and arrived there in 723. Gregory required of him a confession of his faith, as is usual with regard to bishops elect before their consecration. He likewise put to him several questions concerning his missions and converted countries, and after a few days ordained him bishop. Willibald says that on this occasion the pope changed his rugged northern name of Winfrid into that of Boniface; but he could only confirm that change, for we find by the saint's letters that he then bore the name of Boniface, joining with it that of Winfrid. The saint took an oath to maintain the purity of faith and the unity of the church; a copy of which, written with his own hand, he laid upon the tomb of St Peter. Pope Gregory gave him a book of select canons of the church, to serve him for a rule in his conduct, and by letters recommended him to Charles Martel and to all bishops and princes wherever he should have occasion to travel.

The saint, returning to his mission in Hesse, continued his spiritual conquests, and cut down a tall oak consecrated to Jupiter, the timber of which he employed in building a chapel in honour of the prince of the apostles. He founded many churches, and a monastery at Orfordt. The harvest growing daily upon his hands, he procured a new supply of labourers from England, whom he stationed in Hesse and Thuringia. In 732, Gregory III succeeding in the pontificate, St Boniface sent messengers to Rome to consult him upon several difficulties. Gregory showed these deputies great respect and sent by them a pall for St Boniface, to be used by him only when he celebrated the divine mysteries or consecrated bishops. He at the time constituted him Archbishop and Primate of all Germany, with power to erect new bishoprics where he should see it expedient. The saint went himself to Rome for the third time in 738 to visit the tombs of the apostles, and to confer with his holiness about the churches he had founded. The pope received him as a living saint and appointed him legate of the apostolic see in Germany. Boniface, on his return to that country, was called into Bavaria by the Duke Odilo, to reform several abuses. Finding only one bishopric in that country, namely, Passaw, he established three others, Saltzburg, Freisinghein, and Ratisbon, which division the pope confirmed in 739. The holy primate soon after established three new bishoprics, at Erford for Thuringia, at Baraburg for Hesse, since translated to Paderborn, and at Wurtzbourg for Franconia; he added a fourth at Achstat in the palatinate of Bavaria.

Gregory III dying in November 741, his successor Zachary, upon application made to him by St Boniface, again confirmed all he had done in settling the church of Germany. At that time happened a memorable revolution in France, in which that crown was transferred into a new family, fruitful in great princes and valiant heroes. Charles Martel, mayor of the palace, having governed France twenty-six years with great valour and prudence, having conquered Burgundy and Aquitain, humbled the Saxons, and often defeated the Saracens who made formidable invasions from their late settlements in Spain, died in 741, being fifty or fifty-five years old. Since the dignity of mayor of the palace was become hereditary, the title of Duke and Prince of France had been added to it. By the death of Charles, his eldest son, Carloman, became Mayor and Prince of Austrasia, or Lorrain, and that part of Germany which was then subject to France. He subdued Odilo and Thierry—the former Duke of Bavaria and the latter of Saxony—and made them tributary; but it was his chief aim to consult by peace the happiness of his people, to protect religion, and to cultivate the useful arts. He bent his whole authority to second the zeal of our saint in all his undertakings. Two impostors were stirred up by the devil to disturb the infant church of Germany. The one Adalbert, a Frenchman, pretended to know the secrets of hearts, gave



his own hair and the paring of his nails as relics, and wrote his own life, filled with absurd pretended miracles, enthusiasm, and pride. The other, called Clement, a Scotsman, rejected the canons or the ecclesiastical laws, taught that Christ in his descent into hell delivered all the souls of the damned; he also held heterodox opinions concerning predestination. St Boniface, in a council in Germany, condemned them both in 742; Carloman caused them to be confined in close prison, and the sentence of our saint and his council was afterwards confirmed by the pope in a synod at Rome in 745.<sup>1</sup> St Boniface held another council in 743 at Leptines, now Lessines, a palace of the kings of Austrasia, near Ath, in the diocese of Cambray. Prince Carloman finding him a man full of the science of the saints and of the spirit of God, listened to his advice in all things relating to the salvation of his soul. His brother, Pepin the Short, became mayor of the palace for the whole kingdom till, in 752, he was chosen king by the unanimous consent of the whole nation. The new king, desiring to be crowned by the most holy prelate in his dominions, insisted upon the ceremony being performed by St Boniface. This was done at Soissons, where our saint presided in a synod of bishops, and all the states of the French kingdom assisted at the coronation. St Boniface, in his first council in Germany, is styled legate of St Peter. From the councils of Lessines and Soissons, he appears to have been legate of the apostolic see in France no less than in Germany. In 746 he entreated Pope Zachary to send a bishop legate into France, that he might be eased of that burthen. The pope refused to grant this request; but allowed him, by a singular privilege, to choose whom he thought best qualified to be his successor in Germany after his death. The saint had been some years Archbishop of Germany before he fixed his metropolitan see in any particular city. Cologne was at first judged the most proper, it being then the metropolis, but Gervilio, the Bishop of Mentz, having been deposed in a council, that city was pitched upon in 745.

To assist him in planting the spirit of meekness and Christian piety in a fierce and uncivilized nation, St Boniface invited over from England many holy men and religious women. Among these were St Wigbert, St Burchard, Bishop of Wurtzbourg, St Willibald, Bishop of Eichstad, and St Lullus; and among the holy virgins were St Lioba, our saint's cousin, St Thecla, St Walburge, Bertigita, and Contruda, to whom he committed the direction of several nunneries which he erected in Thuringia, Bavaria, and other places. In 746 he laid the foundation of the great abbey of Fuld or Fulden, which continued long the most renowned seminary of piety and learning in all that part of the world. The abbot is now a prince of the empire, lord of a very extensive territory, and is styled primate of all the abbots in Germany, and chancellor to the empress.

<sup>1</sup> Conc. t. vi. pp. 14, 15, and St Bonif. Ep. 138.

St Boniface had several years before founded a monastery at Fridislar in honour of St Peter; another at Hamenburgh in honour of St Michael; and one at Ordorfe in honour of the same archangel, in all which the monks gained their livelihood by the labour of their hands. The pastoral care of so many churches did not hinder this holy man from extending his zeal to remote countries, especially to that which gave him birth. Ethelbald, King of Mercia, was a lover of justice and liberal to the poor; but sullied these virtues by abominable lusts, abstaining from matrimony that he might wallow in filthy incontinency; and his scandalous example was imitated by many of his courtiers. St Boniface, touched to the quick at the news of such scandals, in 745 wrote to this prince a strong remonstrance and exhortation to penance, putting him in mind how base it was for him to be the slave of lust to the injury of God, by whose benefit he ruled so great a nation; and how heinous a crime it was to set such an example to his subjects. He tells him that chastity is so highly prized among the pagan inhabitants of Old Saxony that if a married woman was convicted of adultery, or a virgin of fornication, she was strangled and her body burnt; and he who had dishonoured her was hanged over her grave; or she was scourged on her back by women and stabbed with knives, first in one village, then in the next, and so round the country, till she expired under her torments. "If Gentiles, who know not God," says the saint, "have so great a zeal for chastity, what ought to be your sentiments who are a Christian and a king?" He puts him in mind of the unhappy end of his predecessor Coelred, and of Osred, King of the Northumbrians, both addicted to this shameful vice, and both snatched away by sudden death in the midst of their evil courses. From the gift of Croiland, mentioned by Ingulphus, and from the laws of this king in favour of the church and of the abbey of Ripendune, Natalis Alexander and some others think he became a sincere penitent. He was slain soon after, in 755, by Beornred, a rebel, who usurped his throne.

St Boniface wrote a circular letter to all the bishops, priests, deacons, canons, monks, nuns, and all the people of England, conjuring them earnestly to join in holy prayer to beg of God, who desires that all may be saved, that he would vouchsafe in his infinite mercy to shower down his blessing upon the labours of all those who are employed in endeavouring to bring souls to his saving knowledge and holy love. He often desired books to be sent him from England, especially the works of Bede, whom he calls a lamp of the church.<sup>1</sup> He entreated the abbess Edburge<sup>2</sup> to send him the epistles of St Peter written in letters of gold, to inspire carnal men with greater respect, and to satisfy his devotion to that apostle, whom he calls the patron of his mission. Writing to the Abbot Aldherius,<sup>3</sup> he begs that he would cause the sacrifice of the mass to be offered for the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 9. p. 73.<sup>2</sup> Ib. 28.<sup>3</sup> Ib. 26.

souls of those missionaries who were lately deceased. In several other epistles he mentions the mutual contract of charity between the missionaries abroad and the priests and monks in England, that they should reciprocally pray for their deceased brethren. In a letter to a nun,<sup>1</sup> he mentions how much he had to suffer in his mission from the pagans, from false Christians, and even from ecclesiastics of debauched morals. Yet the ardour of his charity made him continually to thirst after greater sufferings, and especially after the honour of laying down his life for the love of him who died for us. In a letter to Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury,<sup>2</sup> treating of the duties of pastors, he says, "Let us fight for the Lord in these days of bitterness and affliction. If this be the will of God, let us die for the holy laws of our fathers, that we may arrive with them at the eternal inheritance. Let us not be dumb dogs, sleeping sentinels, hirelings that fly at the sight of the wolf; but watchful and diligent pastors, preaching to the great and small, to the rich and poor, to every age and condition, being instant in season and out of season." St Boniface, in his homilies, most frequently inculcates the obligation and sanctity of the baptismal vows.

This apostle of so many nations thought he had yet done nothing so long as he had not spilt his blood for Christ, and earnestly desired to attain to that happiness. Making use of the privilege which Pope Zachary had granted him of choosing his successor, he consecrated St Lullus, an Englishman, formerly monk of Malmesbury, Archbishop of Mentz, in 754, leaving him to finish the churches which he had begun in Thuringia and that of Fuld, and conjuring him to apply himself strenuously to the conversion of the remaining idolaters. He wrote a letter to Fulrad, Abbot of St Denys, begging him to make this choice of St Lullus agreeable to King Pepin, and as his infirmities admonished him that he had not long to remain in this world, he conjured that prince to take into his favour and protection his disciples, who were almost all strangers, either priests dispersed in many places for the service of the church, or monks assembled in his little monastery, where they were employed in instructing children. He says that priests lived on the frontiers of the pagans, very poor and destitute, and that they were able to get their bread, but not clothing unless they were assisted. Pepin granted his request, and Pope Stephen II confirmed his nomination of Lullus and his resignation of the see of Mentz in order that he might go and preach the gospel to those nations which still remained unconverted.

The saint, looking upon himself as devoted to labour in the conversion of infidels, and being at liberty to follow the call of heaven, would not allow himself any repose so long as he saw souls perishing in the shades of darkness, and his extreme desire of martyrdom seemed to give him a

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 16, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. 105.

foresight of his approaching death. Having therefore settled his church and put all things in the best order possible, he set out with certain zealous companions to preach to the savage infidel inhabitants of the northern parts of East Friesland. Having converted and baptized some thousands among them, he appointed the eve of Whitsunday to administer to the neophytes the sacrament of confirmation in the open fields in the plains of Dockum, near the banks of the little rivulet Bordne. He pitched there a tent and was waiting in prayer the arrival of the new converts when, behold! instead of friends, a band of enraged infidels appeared on the plain all in arms and, coming up, rushed into his tent. The servants that were with the holy martyr were for defending his life by fighting; but he would not suffer it, declaring that the day he had long waited for was come, which was to bring him to the eternal joys of the Lord. He encouraged the rest to meet with cheerfulness and constancy a death which was to them the gate of everlasting life. While he was thus employed, the pagans attacked them sword in hand and put them all to death. St Boniface suffered in the seventy-fifth year of his age, on the 5th of June, in the year of Christ 755. With him were martyred fifty-two companions, of whom the principal persons were Eoban, bishop; Wintrung, Walter, and Adelhere, priests; Hamund, Strichald, and Bosa, deacons; Waccar, Gunderhar, Williker, and Hadulph, monks: the rest were laymen. The barbarians expected to have a great booty of gold and silver in the baggage of the holy martyrs, but found nothing in their trunks but relics and books, which they scattered about in the fields or hid in ditches and marshes. Some of these things were afterwards found, and of them three books are still preserved in the monastery of Fuld or Fulden: namely, a book of the gospels writ in St Boniface's own hand; a copy of a Harmony, or canons of the New Testament; and a third book which is stained with the martyr's blood and contains the letter of St Leo to Theodorus, Bishop of Frejus, and the discourse of St Ambrose on the Holy Ghost, with his treatise, "*De bono Mortis*; or, On the Advantage of Death." The body of St Boniface was first carried to Utrecht, thence to Mentz, and lastly to Fuld, where it was deposited by St Lullus, as the saint himself had desired. It is to this day regarded as the greatest treasure of that monastery. The continuators of Bollandus have given us, under the title of "*Analecta Bonifaciana*," a long history of an incredible number of miracles down to this present time which have been wrought by God at the relics, and through the intercession of St Boniface.

He who sincerely loves God rejoices with this martyr to sacrifice to his honour his life and whatever he has received of his bounty. With his whole strength he consecrates all his faculties eternally to the glorious and holy functions of divine love. He prays and labours without inter-

mission that God alone may reign in his own soul, and ardently desires that all tongues may never cease to sound forth his praises, and that all creatures may have but one heart, always to be employed with the angels and blessed spirits in doing his will, in loving him, and in glorifying his adorable name. Baronius pathetically exhorts the Germans to consider what men their apostles were, and what were the maxims of the gospel they received from them; for with these their holy pastors and teachers, who will sit with the supreme Judge at the last day, they will be confronted and judged by them.<sup>1</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 5 :*

ST BONIFACE, martyr, apostle of Germany : ST DOROTHEUS of Tyre, martyr, suffered for the faith but survived his torments and lived to the time of Julian the Apostate : ST DOROTHEUS, an Egyptian, surnamed The Theban : other saints of this name are an eminent anchorite of the same time, and another surnamed the Archimandrite in whose monastery lived St Dositheus : and ST ILLIDIUS, fourth Bishop of Clermont, whose holiness is extolled by St Gregory of Tours.

## JUNE 6

## ST PHILIP THE DEACON

So much was the number of the faithful increased after the first sermons of St Peter that, the apostles being entirely taken up in the ministry of the word, it was judged proper to choose seven men, full of the Spirit of God and wisdom, to have care of the poor under the name of deacons or ministers. St Philip is named the second in this catalogue,<sup>2</sup> who, according to St Isidore of Pelusium, was a native of Cæsarea in Palestine. The deacons were not confined to what seemed to give birth to the institution; for at that time the divine mysteries were sometimes administered to the faithful at a supper, as appears from St Paul,<sup>3</sup> though afterwards the apostles ordered that the blessed eucharist should only be received by persons fasting, as St Austin observes, and is clear from Tertullian and others. Only the priests could consecrate the holy mysteries; but deacons often delivered the cup. That the deacons were appointed to minister in the holy mysteries (and this, probably, by an express order of Christ) is manifest from the holy scriptures and from the writings of the disciples of the apostles. In their first institution they were ordained by an imposition of hands and prayer.<sup>4</sup> St Paul requires almost the same conditions in the deacons as in bishops or priests, and that they be tried before they be admitted into the ministry.<sup>5</sup> St Ignatius, writing to the Trallians,<sup>6</sup> calls the deacons "the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ." And to the Smyrnæans he says: "Reverence the deacons as the precept of the Lord."<sup>7</sup> In his other epistles he usually joins the deacons with the priests and bishops as sacred ministers in the church.

<sup>1</sup> Baron. ad. Ann. 723, n. 16, et ad Ann. 755, n. 30, t. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Acts vi. 5.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Acts vi. 6.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. ad. Trallian, n. 2, p. 62.

<sup>7</sup> Ep. ad Smyrn. n. 7, p. 37.

St Cyprian calls deacons the ministers of the episcopacy and of the church.<sup>1</sup> The sacred functions in which deacons were employed were, first, To minister to the priest at the sacrifice of the eucharist, as St Laurence testifies in his famous words to Pope Sixtus, recorded by St Ambrose.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, To baptize in the absence of the priest. Thirdly, To preach the divine word. The holy deacon St Philip excelled so much in preaching the gospel that he acquired the name of Evangelist, by which he is distinguished in the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>3</sup> After the martyrdom of St Stephen, the disciples being dispersed into several places, St Philip first carried the light of the gospel into Samaria. The people of that country listened with one accord to his discourses, and, by seeing the miracles which he wrought in confirmation of the doctrine he delivered, great numbers were converted to the faith: for many who were possessed by unclean spirits were delivered, and others afflicted with palsies or lamenesses were healed.<sup>4</sup>

At that time one Simon, surnamed the Magician, made a great figure in Samaria. He was a native of Gitton in that country, and before the arrival of St Philip had acquired a great reputation in the city of Samaria, seducing the people whom he had for a long time bewitched with his magical practices, as St Luke testifies,<sup>5</sup> who adds, "That they all gave ear to him from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the power of God, which is called great." The infernal spirit sought to oppose these illusions and artifices to the true miracles of Christ, as he was suffered to assist the magicians of Pharaoh against Moses. But God, when he permits the devil to exert in such an extraordinary manner his natural strength and powers, always furnishes his servants with means of discerning and confounding the imposture. Accordingly the clear miracles wrought by Philip put the magician quite out of countenance. Being himself witness to them, and seeing the people run to Philip to be baptized by him, he also believed, or pretended to believe; and being baptized, stuck close to Philip, hoping to attain to the power of effecting miracles like those which he saw him perform. The apostles at Jerusalem, hearing of the conversion of Samaria, sent thither SS. Peter and John to confirm the converts by the imposition of hands, which sacrament only bishops could confer. With the grace of this sacrament at that time were usually conferred certain external gifts of the miraculous powers. Simon, seeing these communicated to the laity by the imposition of the hands of the apostles, offered them money, saying: "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay my hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." But St Peter said to him, "Keep thy money to thyself to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Do penance for this thy wickedness; and pray to God, if perhaps

<sup>1</sup> St Cypr. ep. 65, ed. Pam.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxi. 8. See Grotius, ib.

<sup>3</sup> Acts viii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Lib. i. Offic. c. 41.

<sup>5</sup> Acts viii. 8.

this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. For I see thou art in the gall of bitterness, and engaged in the bonds of iniquity." Simon, being in that evil disposition, was incapable of receiving the gifts of the Holy Ghost, at least interior sanctifying grace. Nor did he sincerely seek this. However, fearing the threat of temporal evils, he answered, "Pray you for me to the Lord, that none of these things may come upon me." From this crime of Simon, the sin of selling any spiritual thing for a temporal price, which both the law of nature and the positive divine law most severely condemn, is called *simony*; and to maintain that practice lawful is usually termed in the canon law the heresy of Simon Magus. We have no further account of this impostor in the holy scriptures, except that he and his disciples seemed marked out by St Paul and St Jude;<sup>1</sup> and St James proves against them<sup>2</sup> the necessity of good works to salvation. St Peter also draws their portrait in the most frightful colours.<sup>3</sup> The fathers generally look upon the conversion of Simon to the faith as an act of hypocrisy, founded only in ambition and temporal views, and in the hope of purchasing the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which he ascribed to a superior art—magic. We learn from St Epiphanius,<sup>4</sup> St Irenæus,<sup>5</sup> Tertullian,<sup>6</sup> Theodoret,<sup>7</sup> and other fathers that he afterwards pretended to be the Messiah and called himself the power of God, who was descended on earth to save men and to re-establish the order of the universe, which he affirmed had been disturbed by the ambition of the angels striving which should be the first, and enslaving men under their government of the world. He said that to hold man in their captivity they had invented the law of good works, whereas he taught that faith alone sufficeth to salvation. He pretended that the world was created by angels, who afterwards revolted from God and usurped an undue power in it. Yet he ordered them to be honoured and sacrifices to be offered to the Father by the mediation of these powers, not to beg their succour, but to appease them that they might not obstruct our designs on earth, nor hurt us after our death. This superstitious worship of the angels was a downright idolatry and was condemned by St Paul. See on it Tertullian, St Epiphanius, and Theodoret. Simon rejected the Old Testament, saying that it was framed by the angels and that he was come to abolish it. Having purchased a beautiful prostitute at Tyre, he called her Helena and said she was the first intelligence, and that the Father through her had created the angels. He often called himself the Holy Ghost, which name he sometimes gave also to Helena. He required divine honours to be paid to himself under the figure of Jupiter and to Helena under that of Minerva. He denied free-will and sowed the seeds of the abominations afterwards propagated by the Gnostics. His extravagant system was a medley formed

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 3, 8, 13; Jude 4.<sup>2</sup> Jam. ii. 14.<sup>3</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3, 13.<sup>4</sup> St Epiph. Her. 21.<sup>5</sup> St Irenæus, lib. i. c. 20.<sup>6</sup> Præscr. c. 33.<sup>7</sup> Hæret. fabul. c. 1, 5, 9.

from Paganism and the Christian, Jewish, and Samaritan doctrines. He strove in all things to rival Christ. His journey to Rome will be mentioned in the life of St Peter. St Philip had the affliction, amidst the spiritual success of his ministry, to see the hypocrisy of this monster, and the havoc of souls made by his impiety and blasphemies. Christ himself was pleased to suffer much contradiction in his doctrine, to teach his disciples patience and meekness under the like trials from the obstinacy of impenitent sinners. If their labours were always successful, where would be the crown of their patience?

St Philip was probably still at Samaria when an angel appearing to him, ordered him to go southward to a road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. There he found an Ethiopian eunuch, one of the principal officers in the court of Queen Candace, and her high treasurer who, being a Jew, had made a religious visit to the temple and was then on his road homewards. Such was his affection to the sacred writings that he was reading the prophecy of Isaiah as he was travelling in his chariot. The passage on which he was meditating happened to be that<sup>1</sup> in which the prophet, speaking of the passion of Christ, says he was led like a sheep to the slaughter; that his humiliation was crowned, his ignominious condemnation being taken away by the glory of his resurrection; for who can explain his eternal generation or the glorious resurrection of his humanity, which is as it were a second miraculous birth. St Philip expounded to him this text, which the eunuch did not understand, instructed him perfectly in the faith, and baptized him. After which the eunuch, returning home full of joy, became the apostle and catechist of Ethiopia, his country, as St Jerom assures us<sup>2</sup> from Eusebius. The Abyssinians to this day regard him as their apostle. As for St Philip, when he had baptized his illustrious convert, he was conveyed by God to Azotus, where he published the gospel, and in all the other towns in his way to Cæsarea, the place of his ordinary residence. Twenty-four years afterwards St Paul, when he came thither in 58, lodged in his house. His four daughters were virgins and prophetesses.<sup>3</sup> St Jerom says they preserved their virginity by vow, or at least out of devotion.<sup>4</sup> The same father thinks their gift of prophecy was the recompense of their chastity.<sup>5</sup> St Philip probably died at Cæsarea. It was the Apostle St Philip who died at Hierapolis, whose death and daughters some have confounded with the deacon's.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 6:*

ST CLAUDE, Archbishop of Besançon, the model and oracle of the clergy of that place; he died in 703: ST GUDWALL, Bishop, born in Cornwall, consecrated to God from his cradle: ST JARLATH, who studied under St Benignus; honoured as the Patron of Tuam on this day, in Ireland: ST NORBERT, Archbishop of Magdebourg, founder of the Premonstratensian Order; he was born near Cleves, 1080; turned from a worldly life by a thunderstorm, he became a fervent servant of God, renowned for wisdom, holiness, and austerity: and ST PHILIP THE DEACON.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. liii. 7, as read in the LXX.

<sup>2</sup> St Hieron. in Isa. liii. et Ep. 103; Eusebius, Hist. lib. ii.; St Iren. lib. iii. c. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxi. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Lib. i. contra Jovin. c. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 8, et Ep. 78, c. 16.



JUNE 7

## ST PAUL, MARTYR, BISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE

(A.D. 350)

[From St Athanasius, Ep. ad Solitar., &c. Socrates, Sozomen, &c. See Tillem. t. vii. p. 251. Baert, the Bollandist, t. ii. 2 Junii, p. 13.]

ST PAUL was a native of Thessalonica, but deacon of the church of Constantinople in 340 when the bishop Alexander, lying on his death-bed, recommended him for his successor. He was accordingly chosen, and being a great master in the art of speaking and exceeding zealous in the defence of the Catholic faith, he was a terror to the Arians. Macedonius, who was passionately in love with that dignity, and supported by a powerful faction of the heretics, spread abroad many calumnies against the new bishop. But the accusation being destitute of probability, he was obliged to drop the charge; and he so well acted the part of hypocrite that he was soon after ordained priest by St Paul.<sup>1</sup> However, Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was the ringleader of the Arians and had been already translated from the see of Berytus to that of Nicomedia, against the canons, began to cast his ambitious eye on that of Constantinople, revived the old slanders and impeached Paul falsely, alleging that he had led a disorderly life before his consecration; and, secondly, that he ought not to have been chosen bishop without the consent of the two neighbouring metropolitans of Heraclea and Nicomedia. The election of Paul had happened during the absence of Constantius. This was made a third article of the impeachment; and the two former having been easily confuted, this was so much exaggerated to that prince as a contempt of his imperial dignity that St Paul was unjustly deposed by an assembly of Arian prelates and the ambitious Eusebius placed in his see in 340. Our saint, seeing himself rendered useless to his flock whilst Arianism reigned triumphant in the East under the protection of Constantius, took shelter in the West in the dominions of Constans. He was graciously received by that prince and by St Maximinus at Triers, and after a short stay in that city went to Rome, where he found St Athanasius, and assisted at the council held by Pope Julius in 341 of about eighty bishops, in the church in which, as St Athanasius informs us, the priest Vito was accustomed to hold assemblies of the people; that is, was priest of that parish. This is that Vito who, with Vincent and Osius, was legate of St Sylvester in the Council of Nice. By this synod St Athanasius, Marcellus of Ancyra, and St Paul were ordered to be restored to their respective sees. And Pope Julius, as Socrates and Sozomen relate, by virtue of his authority in the church, sent them back with letters to the

<sup>1</sup> Socr. lib. ii. c. 6; Sozom. lib. iii. c. 4; St Athan. ad Solitar. p. 823.

eastern bishops, requiring them to restore them to their bishoprics. The excellent letter of Pope Julius to the oriental bishops is preserved by St Athanasius.<sup>1</sup> The pope particularly reproves the persecutors for having presumed to judge bishops, even of the principal sees which the apostles had governed, without having first writ to him according to custom.

St Paul went back to Constantinople, but could not recover his see till the death of his powerful antagonist, who had usurped it, made way for him in 342. Though the Catholics took that opportunity to reinstate him in his dignity, the Arians, who were headed by Theognis of Nice and Theodorus of Heraclea, constituted Macedonius their bishop. This schismatical ordination was followed by a furious sedition, in which almost the whole city ran to arms and several persons lost their lives. Constantius, who was then at Antioch, upon the news of these commotions ordered his general, Hermogenes, who was going into Thrace, to pass by Constantinople and drive Paul out of the city. The general found the mob in too violent a ferment, and whilst he endeavoured to execute his commission by force, lost his own life. This outrage drew Constantius himself to Constantinople in the depth of winter. At the entreaty of the senate, he pardoned the people but banished Paul. Nevertheless he refused to confirm the election of Macedonius on account of his share in the late sedition. St Paul seems to have retired back to Triers. We find him again at Constantinople in 344 with letters of recommendation from the Emperor of the West. Constantius only allowed his re-establishment for fear of his brother's arms, and the saint's situation in the East continued very uneasy; for he had much to suffer from the power and malice of the Arian party. He hoped for a redress from the Council of Sardica in 347. The Eusebians, withdrawing to Philippopolis, thundered out an excommunication against St Paul, St Athanasius, Pope Julius, and several other pillars of the Catholic faith. The death of Constans, in 350, left Constantius at full liberty to treat the Catholics as he pleased. Upon application made to him by those of his party, he sent from Antioch, where he then was, an order to Philip, his *Præfectus Prætorii*, to drive Paul out of the church and city of Constantinople and to place Macedonius in his see. Philip, being attached to the Arian party but fearing a sedition from the great affection which the people bore their pastor, privately sent for him to one of the public baths of the city and there showed him the emperor's commission. The saint submitted cheerfully, though his condemnation was in every respect notoriously irregular. The people, suspecting some foul design, flocked about the door; but Philip caused a passage to be made by breaking down a window on the other side of the building, and sent him under a safeguard to the palace, which was not far off. From

<sup>1</sup> *Apud St Athanas. Apo. contra Arianos, p. 141.*

thence he was shipped away to Thessalonica, and at first allowed to choose the place of his exile. But his enemies soon repented of this mildness, and he was loaded with chains and sent to Singara in Mesopotamia. From thence he was carried to Emesa, in Syria, and afterwards to Cucusus, a small town on the confines of Cappadocia and Armenia, famous for its bad air and unhealthful situation, in the deserts of Mount Taurus. Here he was confined in a close dark place, and left to starve to death. After he had passed six days without food he was, to the great disappointment of his enemies, found alive; upon which they strangled him and gave out that he died after a short sickness. Philagius, an Arian officer who was upon the spot when this was executed, told the whole affair to several persons, from whom St Athanasius had it.<sup>1</sup> His martyrdom happened in 350 or 351. The divine vengeance soon overtook Philip, who the same year was deprived of his honours and estate and banished. The Arians from this time remained masters of the church of Constantinople till the year 379, when St Gregory Nazianzen was chosen bishop. The body of St Paul was brought to Ancyra in Galatia and, by the order of Theodosius the Great, was thence translated to Constantinople in 381, about thirty years after his death. It was buried there in the great church built by Macedonius, which from that time was known by no other name than that of St Paul.<sup>2</sup> His remains were removed to Venice in 1226, where they are kept with great respect in the Church of St Laurence, belonging to a noble monastery of Benedictin nuns.<sup>3</sup>

The Arian emperor Constantius objected to the Catholics the prosperity of his reign as a proof of the justice and truth of his cause; but he had not then seen the issue. When Polycrates of Samos boasted that fortune was in his pay, he little thought that he should shortly after end his life at Sardis on a cross. The smiles of the world are usually, to impenitent sinners, the most dreadful of all divine judgments. By prosperity they are blinded in their passions, and "resemble victims fattened for slaughter, crowned for a sacrifice," according to the elegant expression of Minutius Felix.<sup>4</sup> Of this we may understand the divine threat of showing them temporal mercy: "Let us have pity on the wicked man, and he will not learn justice."<sup>5</sup> Upon which words St Bernard cries, "This temporal mercy of God is more cruel than any anger. O Father of mercies, remove far from me this indulgence, excluding from the paths of justice."<sup>6</sup> Who does not pray that if he err he may rather be corrected by the tenderness of a father than disinherited as a castaway? Even the just must suffer

<sup>1</sup> St Athan. ad Solitar. t. i. p. 813, et de fugâ suâ, p. 703.

<sup>2</sup> Socr. lib. v. c. 9; Sozom. lib. vii. c. 10; Photius, Cod. 257.

<sup>3</sup> See Baërt. p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> In Octav.

<sup>5</sup> Isa. xxvi. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Serm. 42 in Cant.

with Christ if they hope to reign with him. He who enjoys here an uninterrupted flow of prosperity sails among rocks and shelves.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 7 :*

ST COLMAN, Bishop of Dromore; his eminent virtue is said to have been foretold by St Patrick : ST GODESCHALC, prince of the Western Vandals; his companion martyrs were Ebbo, a priest, and others : ST MERIADEC, Bishop of Vannes, died about 1302, titular saint of many chapels in Brittany : ST PAUL, Bishop of Constantinople : ST ROBERT, Abbot of Newminster, a Cistercian monastery in Northumberland : and ST WILLIBALD, brother of St Walburga.

## JUNE 8

### ST WILLIAM, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

HE was the son of Earl Herbert and Emma, sister to King Stephen. He learned from his infancy that true greatness consists only in humility and virtue; and renounced the world in his youth, employing his riches to purchase unfading treasures in heaven by works of mercy to the poor and giving himself wholly to the study and practice of religion. Being promoted to holy orders, he was elected treasurer in the metropolitical Church of York under the learned and good Archbishop Thurstan. When that prelate, after having held his dignity twenty years, retired among the Cluniac monks at Pontefract to prepare himself for his death, which happened the year following, St William was chosen archbishop by the majority of the chapter and consecrated at Winchester in September 1144, according to Le Neve's *Fasti*.<sup>1</sup> But Osbert, the archdeacon, a turbulent man, procured Henry Murdach, a Cistercian monk of the abbey of Fountains, who was also a man of great learning and a zealous preacher, to be preferred at Rome, whither William went to demand his pall and to plead the cause of his constituents rather than his own. Being deprived by Pope Eugenius III in 1147, he who had always looked upon this dignity with trembling appeared much greater in the manner in which he bore this repulse than he could have done in the highest honours. Being returned into England, he went privately to Winchester to his uncle Henry, bishop of that see, by whom he was honourably entertained. He led at Winchester a penitential life in silence, solitude, and prayer in a retired house belonging to the bishop, bewailing the frailties of his past life with many tears, for seven years. The Archbishop Henry then dying in 1153, and Anastasius IV having succeeded Eugenius III in the see of Rome, St William, to satisfy the importunity of others, by whom he was again elected, undertook a second journey to Rome and received the pallium from his holiness. The saint on his return was met on the road by Robert de Gaunt, Dean, and Osbert, Archdeacon of the Church of York, who insolently forbade him to enter that city or diocese. He

<sup>1</sup> P. 307.

received the affront with an engaging meekness, but pursued his journey. He was received with incredible joy by his people. The great numbers who assembled on that occasion to see and welcome him broke down the wooden bridge over the river Ouse, in the middle of the city of York, and a great many persons fell into the river. The saint, seeing this terrible accident, made the sign of the cross over the river and addressed himself to God with many tears. All the world ascribed to his sanctity and prayers the miraculous preservation of the whole multitude, especially of the children, who all escaped out of the waters without hurt. St William showed no enmity and sought no revenge against his most inveterate enemies, who had prepossessed Eugenius III against him by the blackest calumnies, and by every unwarrantable means had obstructed his good designs. He formed many great projects for the good of his diocese and the salvation of souls, but within a few weeks after his installation was seized with a fever, of which he died on the third day of his sickness, on the 8th of June 1154. He was buried in his cathedral, and canonized by Pope Nicholas III about the year 1280. At the same time his body was taken up by Archbishop William Wickwane, and his relics put into a very rich shrine and deposited in the nave of the same metropolitan church in 1284. The feast of his translation was kept on the 7th of January.<sup>1</sup> King Edward I and his whole court assisted at this ceremony, during which many miracles are attested to have been wrought. A table containing a list of thirty-six miracles, with a copy of an indulgence of one hundred and forty days to all who should devoutly visit his tomb, is still to be seen in the vestry, but no longer legible, as Mr Drake mentions.<sup>2</sup> The shrine, with its rich plate and jewels, was plundered at the Reformation; but the saint's bones were deposited in a box within a coffin and buried in the nave under a large spotted marble stone. Mr Drake had the curiosity to see the ground opened, and found them with their box and coffin in 1732. He laid them again in the same place with a mark.<sup>3</sup> See Nicholas Trivet, in his *Annals of Six Kings of England*, ad an. 1146; Stubbs, *Act. Pontif. Ebor. in St Willelmo*, Capgrave's *Legend*, Gulielm. Neubrig; *De Rebus Anglicis sui temporis*, Brompton, Gervasius Monachus inter 10 *Scriptor Angliæ*, and Drake, in his *curious History and Antiquities of York*; also Papebroke's remarks, Jun. t. ii. p. 136.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 8 :*

ST CLOU or CLODULPHUS, Bishop of Metz, a son of St Arnold : ST GILDARD or GODARD, Bishop of Rouen, commemorated with St Medard : ST MAXIMINUS, first Archbishop of Aix in Provence : ST MEDARD, Bishop of Noyon, one of the most illustrious prelates in France in the sixth century : ST SVRA of Ireland, virgin, sister to St Fiace, fired by whose example she left all for Christ : and ST WILLIAM, Archbishop of York.

<sup>1</sup> See the York Breviary, printed at Paris in 1526.

<sup>2</sup> F. 419.

<sup>3</sup> *lb.*

JUNE 9

## ST COLUMBA, OR COLUMKILLE, ABBOT

(A.D. 597)

[From Bede, Hist. lib. iii. c. 4, and his life, written by Cummeneus, surnamed Albus, Abbot of Hy (who, according to the Four Masters, died in 668), extant in Mabillon, *sec. Ben.* i, p. 361, and the same enlarged into three books by Adamnon, Abbot of Hy, in 700, published by Canisius, *Lect. Antiq.* t. v., and by Surius. Both these lives abound with relations of wonderful miracles. William, Bishop of Derry, in his *Irish Historical Library*, p. 85, mentions a poem of good authority, called the *Amrha*, or *Vision of St Columkille*, which was written soon after his death, and which records his principal actions conformable to those authors. See also Bishop Tanner de *Scriptor. Brit.* p. 192; Sir James Ware, lib. i. *Scriptor. Hibern.* p. 14; Item in *Monasteriologiá Hibernicá*, p. 186; Colgan, in *MSS.* ad 9 Jun. The works ascribed to him in an Irish MS. in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; and *Leabhar Lecan*, i.e. Book of Lecane, a very old and precious Irish MS. of Antiquities of that island in the Irish college at Paris, p. 58.]

ST COLUMBA, commonly pronounced Colme, was one of the greatest patriarchs of the monastic order in Ireland, and the apostle of the Picts. To distinguish him from other saints of the same name he was surnamed Columkille, from the great number of monastic cells, called by the Irish Killes, of which he was the founder. He was of most noble extraction from Neil, and was born at Gartan, in the county of Tyrconnel, in 521. He learned from his childhood that there is nothing great, nothing worth our esteem or pursuit, which does not advance the divine love in our souls, to which he totally devoted himself with an entire disengagement of his heart from the world and in perfect purity of mind and body. He learned the divine scriptures and the lessons of an ascetic life under the holy bishop St Finian, in his great school of Cluain-iraid. Being advanced to the order of priesthood in 546, he began to give admirable lessons of piety and sacred learning, and in a short time formed many disciples. He founded, about the year 550, the great monastery of Dairmagh, now called Durrough, which original name signifies Field of Oaks, and besides many smaller, those of Doire or Derry, in Ulster, and of Sord or Swords, about six miles from Dublin. St Columba composed a rule which, as Usher, Tanner, and Sir James Ware inform us, is still extant in the old Irish. This rule he settled in the hundred monasteries which he founded in Ireland and Scotland. It was chiefly borrowed from the ancient oriental monastic institutes, as the inquisitive Sir Roger Twisden observes<sup>1</sup> of all the old British and Irish monastic orders.

King Dermont, or Dermotius, being offended at the zeal of St Columba in reproving public vices, the holy abbot left his native country and passed into North Britain, now called Scotland. He took along with him twelve disciples, and arrived there, according to Bede, in the year of Christ 565, the ninth of the reign of Bridius, the son of Meilochon, the most powerful king of the Picts; which nation the saint converted from idolatry to the faith of Christ by his preaching, virtues, and miracles. But this we are

<sup>1</sup> In his *Rise of the Monastic State*, p. 36.

to understand only of the northern Picts and the Highlanders, separated from the others by Mount Grampus, the highest part of which is called Drum-Albin; for Bede tells us in the same place that the southern Picts had received the faith long before by the preaching of St Ninias, the first bishop of Whitherne, in Galloway.

The Picts having embraced the faith, gave St Columba the little island of Hy, or Iona, called from him Y-colm-kille, twelve miles from the land, in which he built the great monastery which was for several ages the chief seminary of North Britain and continued long the burying-place of the kings of Scotland, with the bodies of innumerable saints, which rested in that place. Out of this nursery St Columba founded several other monasteries in Scotland. In the same school were educated the holy bishops Aidan, Finian, and Colman, who converted to the faith the English Northumbers. This great monastery, several ages afterwards, embraced the rule of St Bennet.

St Columba's manner of living was always most austere. He lay on the bare floor with a stone for his pillow, and never interrupted his fast. Yet his devotion was neither morose nor severe. His countenance always appeared wonderfully cheerful and bespoke to all that beheld him the constant interior serenity of his holy soul, and the unspeakable joy with which it overflowed from the presence of the Holy Ghost. Such was his fervour that in whatever he did he seemed to exceed the strength of man; and as much as in him lay he strove to suffer no moment of his precious time to pass without employing it for the honour of God, principally either in praying, reading, writing, or preaching. His incomparable mildness and charity towards all men, and on all occasions, won the hearts of all who conversed with him; and his virtues, miracles, and extraordinary gift of prophecy commanded the veneration of all ranks of men. He was of such authority that neither king nor people did anything without his consent. When King Aedhan, or Aidanus, succeeded to his cousin Conall in the throne of British Scotland in 574, he received the royal insignia from St Columba. Four years before he died, St Columba was favoured with a vision of angels which left him in many tears, because he learned from those heavenly messengers that God, moved by the prayers of the British and Scottish churches, would prolong his exile on earth yet four years. Having continued his labours in Scotland thirty-four years, he clearly and openly foretold his death, and on Saturday, the 9th of June, said to his disciple Diermit, "This day is called the Sabbath, that is, the day of rest, and such will it truly be to me; for it will put an end to my labours." He was the first in the church at matins at midnight; but knelt before the altar, received the viaticum, and having given his blessing to his spiritual children, sweetly slept in the Lord in the year 597, the seventy-seventh of his age. His body was buried in this island, but some

ages after removed to Down, in Ulster, and laid in one vault with the remains of St Patrick and St Brigit. The great monastery of Durrogh, in King's County, afterwards embraced the rules of the Canons Regular, as did also the houses founded by St Brendan, St Comgal, &c. He was honoured both in Ireland and Scotland among the principal patrons of those countries, and is commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on the 9th of June, but in some calendars on the 7th, which seems to have been the day of his death.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 9 :*

ST COLUMBA or COLUMKILLE, Abbot in Ireland, the apostle of the Picts, one of the great patriarchs of the monastic order in Ireland : ST PELAGIA, virgin and martyr in Antioch : ST RICHARD, first Bishop of Andrea in Apulia, an Englishman illustrious for eminent holiness and for miracles : ST PRIMUS and ST FELICIANUS, brother-martyrs who escaped the dangers of many persecutions in Rome succouring the martyrs, and were given the grace of dying for Christ at an advanced age, about the year 286 : and ST VINCENT, probably a deacon, martyred in Agenois in the second or third age.

## JUNE 10

### BLESSED HENRY OF TREVISO, CONFESSOR

HE was a native of Bolsano, in the mountainous part of Tirol, between Trent and Brescia, and of mean extraction. The poverty of his parents deprived him of the advantage of a school education, but from his infancy he studied earnestly to improve every day in the love of God, the true science of a Christian. In quest of work he left Bolsano in his youth and settled at Treviso, the capital city of a province in the Venetian territories. He gained his bread by day-labour, to which he applied himself with unwearied cheerfulness, and which he sanctified by a spirit of penance and recollection. He could not read, but he never failed to assist at all sermons and instructions as much as it lay in his power to do; and by his earnestness and attention he always reaped great advantage from whatever he heard relating to piety. He was diligent in attending at the whole divine office and all public prayer whenever he could; he heard mass every day with an edifying devotion, and when at work joined in desire with those who had the happiness to be always employed in singing the divine praises at the foot of the altar. All the time that was not employed in labour and necessary duties he spent in his devotions either in the church or in private, having his beads always in his hands. Under his painful and assiduous labour he led a most abstemious life, and secretly gave all that he was able to save of his wages to the poor. He studied always to conceal his devotions and other virtues from the eyes of men; but through the veil of his extreme humility they spread the brighter rays. Such was his meekness that under sickness or other afflictions nothing that could savour of complaint or murmuring was ever heard from his mouth: he was an utter stranger to all resentment, and was sweet and



affable to the whole world. When children or others reviled and insulted him, he made no other return than by good words and by praying for them. He frequented the sacraments with extraordinary devotion, and went every day to confession; not out of scrupulosity, either magnifying small imperfections into great sins, or apprehending sin by a disordered imagination where a sound judgment discovers no shadow of evil, but out of a great desire of preserving the utmost purity of conscience that his soul might be worthy to praise Him who is infinite purity and sanctity, and before whom the very angels are not without spot, that is, they appear all imperfection if compared to him. The saint was so solicitous to give all his actions to God with the most pure and perfect intention that he feared a fault of immortification or idle curiosity in a glance of the eye to look at the flight of a bird if it any way distracted his mind or hindered his recollection and attention to God at his work. When by old age he was no longer able to follow his day-labour, a certain pious lawyer gave him a lodging in his own house, and the servant of God lived by daily alms that were sent him, of which he never reserved anything to the next day; but what he retrenched from his own meal he gave away to those whom he thought in the greatest distress. He died on the 10th of June 1315. An incredible concourse of people resorted to the little chamber in which his body lay exposed, and three notaries, appointed by the magistrates to take in writing an account of the miracles wrought by God at his relics, compiled a few days before his burial a relation of two hundred and seventy-six. Out of devotion to his memory everyone sought to obtain some little part of his small furniture, which consisted only of a hair-shirt, a log of wood which served him for a pillow, and twigs, cords, and straw, which made up his hard bed. The Italians call him St Rigo, the diminutive of the name Arrigo, or Henry. See his life written by Dominic, Bishop of Treviso, an eye-witness of his virtues, in the Bolland. t. xx. ad Junij 10, p. 368, and Contin. of Fleury's Eccles. Hist.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 10:*

ST GETULIUS, his brother AMANCIUS, and ST CEREALUS; Cerealus, being sent to apprehend Getulius, was gained to Christ by the two brothers with a fourth martyr named PRIMETIVUS, all beheaded in the beginning of the second century: BLESSED HENRY OF TREVISO, a native of the Tyrol who gained his bread by day labour: ST LANDRY, Bishop of Paris, about 650, buried in the church of St Germain l'Auxerrois: and ST MARGARET, Queen of Scotland, wife of Malcolm III, famed for her boundless charity.

## JUNE 11

### ST BARNABAS, APOSTLE

ST BARNABAS, though not of the number of the twelve chosen by Christ, is nevertheless styled an apostle by the primitive fathers and by St Luke himself.<sup>1</sup> His singular vocation by the Holy Ghost, and the great share

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiv. 13.

he had in the apostolic transactions and labours, have obtained him this title. He was of the tribe of Levi,<sup>1</sup> but born in Cyprus, where his family was settled and had purchased an estate, which Levites might do out of their own country. He was first called Joses, which was the softer Grecian termination for Joseph. After the ascension of Christ, the Apostles changed his name into Barnabas, which word St Luke interprets Son of Consolation, on account of his excellent talent of ministering comfort to the afflicted, says St Chrysostom. St Jerom remarks that this word also signifies the son of a prophet, and in that respect was justly given to this apostle, who excelled in prophetic gifts. The Greeks say that his parents sent him in his youth to Jerusalem to the school of the famous Gamaliel, St Paul's master; and that he was one of the first, and chief, of the seventy disciples of Christ. Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, and St Epiphanius<sup>2</sup> testify that he was one of that number, and consequently had the happiness to receive the precepts of eternal life from the mouth of Christ himself. The first mention we find of him in holy scripture is in the Acts of the Apostles,<sup>3</sup> where it is related that the primitive converts at Jerusalem lived in common, and that as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price and laid it at the feet of the apostles, that they might contribute all in their power to relieve the indigent and might themselves be entirely disengaged from the world, and better fitted to follow Christ in a penitential and mortified life. No one is mentioned in particular on this occasion but St Barnabas, doubtless because he was possessed of a large estate; and perhaps he was the first who set the example of this heroic contempt of the world, which has been since imitated by so many thousands, according to the advice of Christ to the rich man.<sup>4</sup> This contribution was entirely free, but seems to have implied a vow, or at least a solemn promise, of renouncing all temporal possessions for the sake of virtue; for Ananias and his wife Sapphira were struck dead at the feet of St Peter for having secreted some part of the price, and were reproached by that apostle for having lied to the Holy Ghost by pretending to put a cheat upon the ministers of God.

Barnabas made his oblation perfect by the dispositions of his heart with which he accompanied it, and by his piety and zeal became considerable in the government of the church, being "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost," as he is styled by the sacred penman.<sup>5</sup> St Paul coming to Jerusalem three years after his conversion, and not easily getting admittance into the church because he had been a violent persecutor, addressed himself to St Barnabas as a leading man and one who had personal knowledge of him, who presently introduced him to the apostles

<sup>1</sup> Acts iv. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. ii. p. 470; Eus. Hist. lib. i. c. 12, et lib. ii. c. 1; St Epiphanius. Har. 20, c. 4, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iv. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xix. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xi. 24.

Peter and James; and such weight did his recommendation carry that St Peter received the new convert into his house, and he abode with him fifteen days.<sup>1</sup> About four or five days after this, certain disciples, probably Lucius of Cyrene, Simeon who was called Niger, and Manahen, having preached the faith with great success at Antioch, someone of a superior, and probably of the episcopal, order was wanting to form the church and to confirm the neophytes. Whereupon St Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem to settle this new plantation. Upon his arrival he rejoiced exceedingly at the progress which the gospel had made, exhorted the converts to fervour and perseverance, and by his preaching made great additions to their number, insomuch that he stood in need of an able assistant. St Paul being then at Tarsus, Barnabas took a journey thither and invited him to share in his labours at Antioch. Such a field could not but give great joy to the heart of St Paul, who accompanied him back and spent with him a whole year. Their labours prospered, and the church was so much increased at Antioch that the name of Christians was first given to the faithful in that city. In the eulogium which the Holy Ghost gives to St Barnabas, he is called a good man by way of eminence to express his extraordinary mildness, his simplicity void of all disguise, his beneficence, piety, and charity. He is also styled full of faith; which virtue not only enlightened his understanding with the knowledge of heavenly truths, but also passed to his heart, animated all his actions, inspired him with a lively hope and ardent charity, and filled his breast with courage under his labours, and with joy in the greatest persecution and crosses. He is said to have been full of the Holy Ghost, his heart being totally possessed by that divine spirit, and all his affections animated by him; banishing from them the spirit of the world with its vanities, that of the devil with his pride and revenge, and that of the flesh with the love of pleasure and the gratification of sense. So perfect a faith was favoured with an extraordinary gift of miracles, and prepared him for the merits of the apostleship. By the daily persecutions and dangers to which he exposed himself for the faith, his whole life was a continued martyrdom. Whence the council of the apostles at Jerusalem says of him and St Paul, "They have given their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup>

Agabus, a prophet at Antioch, foretold a great famine which raged shortly after over the east, especially in Palestine. Whereupon the church raised a very considerable collection for the relief of the poor brethren in Judæa, which they sent by SS. Paul and Barnabas to the heads of the church at Jerusalem. Josephus informs us that this famine lay heavy upon Judæa during the four years' government of Cuspius Fadus and Tiberius Alexander, under the Emperor Claudius. John, surnamed Mark, attended St Barnabas back to Antioch. He was his kinsman, being son

<sup>1</sup> Galat. i. 18.<sup>2</sup> Acts xv. 26.

to his sister Mary, whose house was the sanctuary where the apostles concealed themselves from the persecutors, and enjoyed the conveniency of celebrating the divine mysteries. The church of Antioch was by that time settled in good order and pretty well supplied with teachers, among whom were Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Syrene, and Manahen, the foster-brother of Herod the Tetrarch, who were all prophets, besides our two apostles.<sup>1</sup> As they were ministering to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them by some of these prophets: "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have taken them." The word separate here signifies being entirely set apart to divine functions and taken from all profane or worldly employments, as it is said of the Levites,<sup>2</sup> and of St Paul.<sup>3</sup> The work to which these two apostles were assumed was the conversion of the Gentile nations. The whole church joined in prayer and fasting to draw down the blessing of heaven on this undertaking—a model always to be imitated by those who embrace an ecclesiastical state. After this preparation, SS. Paul and Barnabas received the imposition of hands, by which some understand the episcopal consecration. But Estius, Suarez, and others more probably think that they were bishops before, and that by this rite is meant no more than the giving of a commission to preach the gospel to the Gentile nations, by which they were consecrated the Apostles of the Gentiles.

Paul and Barnabas, having thus received their mission, left Antioch, taking with them John Mark, and went to Seleucia, a city of Syria adjoining to the sea; whence they set sail for Cyprus and arrived at Salamis, a port formerly of great resort. Having there preached Christ in the synagogues of the Jews, they proceeded to Paphos, a city in the same island, chiefly famous for a temple of Venus, the tutelar goddess of the whole island. The conversion of Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, happened there. These apostles, taking ship again at Paphos, sailed to Perge in Pamphylia. Here John Mark, weary of the hardships and discouraged at the dangers from obstinate Jews and idolaters which everywhere attended their laborious mission, to the great grief of his uncle Barnabas, left them and returned to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas from Perge travelled eighty miles northward to Antioch in Pisidia. There they preached first in the synagogues of the Jews, but finding them obstinately deaf to the happy tidings of salvation, they told them that by preference they had announced first to them the words of eternal life; but since they rejected that inestimable grace they would address the same to the Gentiles, as God had commanded by his prophets. The exasperated Jews had interest enough to get them expelled from that city. The apostles went next to Iconium, the metropolis of Lycaonia, and preached there some time; but at length the malice of the Jews prevailed,

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiii.<sup>2</sup> Num. viii. 14.<sup>3</sup> Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 15.

and the apostles narrowly escaped being stoned. They bent their course hence to Lystra, in the same province, in which city the idolaters, surprised to see a cripple miraculously healed by St Paul, declared the gods were come among them. They gave to Paul the name of Mercury, because he was the chief speaker, and to Barnabas that of Jupiter, probably on account of his gravity and the comeliness of his person. In this persuasion they were preparing to offer sacrifices to them, and were with difficulty diverted from it by the two saints. But soon after, at the malicious instigation of the Jews, they passed to the opposite extreme and stoned Paul. However, though left for dead, when the disciples came (probably to inter his body) he rose up, went back into the city, and the next day departed with Barnabas to Derbe. Hence, after numerous conversions, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and the other cities already mentioned, confirming the faithful in the doctrine they had lately received, and ordaining priests in every church. They at length arrived at Antioch in Syria, and continued with the disciples of that city a considerable time, full of joy and thanksgiving for the success of their ministry. During their abode in this city arose the dispute relating to the necessity of observing the Mosaic rites. St Barnabas joined St Paul in opposing some of the Jewish converts who urged the necessity of observing them under the gospel. This weighty question gave occasion to the council of the apostles at Jerusalem, held in the year 51, wherein SS. Paul and Barnabas gave a full account of the success of their labours amongst the Gentiles, and received a confirmation of their mission and carried back the synodal letter to the new converts of Syria and Cilicia containing the decision of the council, which had exempted the new converts from any obligation on the foregoing head.

St Barnabas gives us a great example of humility in his voluntary deference to St Paul. He had been called first to the faith, had first presented St Paul to the apostles, and passed for first among the doctors of the Church of Antioch; yet on every occasion he readily yields to him the quality of speaker, and the first place; which we must ascribe to his humility. Neither did St Paul seek any other pre-eminence than the first place in all labours. At last, a difference in opinion concerning Mark produced a separation, without the least breach of charity in their hearts. John Mark met them again at Antioch. St Paul proposed to our saint to make a circular visit to the churches of Asia which they had founded. Barnabas was for taking his kinsman Mark with him; but Paul was of a different sentiment in regard to one who before had betrayed a want of courage in the same undertaking. The Holy Ghost would by this occasion separate the two apostles, that for the greater benefit of the church the gospel might be carried into more countries. John Mark by this check became so courageous and fervent that he was from that time one of the

most useful and zealous preachers of the gospel. St Paul afterwards expressed a high esteem of him in his epistle to the Colossians;<sup>1</sup> and during his imprisonment at Rome charged St Timothy to come to him, and to bring with him John Mark, calling him a person useful for the ministry.<sup>2</sup> John Mark finished the course of his apostolic labours at Biblis, in Phœnicia, and is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on the 27th of September. After this separation, St Paul with Silas travelled into Syria and Cilicia, and Barnabas, with his kinsman, betook himself to his native island, Cyprus. Here the sacred writings dismiss his history.

St Barnabas always remembered the conversion of nations was the province allotted to him; nor could he be induced to allow himself any repose whilst he saw whole countries deprived of the light of salvation. Theodoret says he returned again to St Paul, and was sent by him to Corinth with Titus. Dorotheus and the author of the Recognitions suppose him to have been at Rome. The city of Milan honours him as patron from a tradition, supported by monuments which seem to be of the fourth age, affirming that he preached the faith there and was the founder of that church. But how wide soever his missions lay, he always regarded his own country as the province especially allotted to his care; and there he finished his life by martyrdom. Alexander, a monk of Cyprus in the sixth age, hath written an account of his death, in which he relates that the faith, having made great progress in Cyprus by the assiduous preaching, edifying example, and wonderful miracles of this apostle, it happened that certain inveterate Jews, who had persecuted the holy man in Syria, came to Salamis and stirred up many powerful men of that city against him. The saint was taken, roughly handled and insulted by the mob, and after many torments stoned to death. The remains of St Barnabas were found near the city of Salamis, with a copy of the gospel of St Matthew, in Hebrew, laid upon his breast, written with St Barnabas's own hand. The book was sent to the Emperor Zeno in 485, as Theodorus Lector relates.<sup>3</sup> St Paul mentions St Barnabas as still living in the year 56.<sup>4</sup> St Chrysostom speaks of him as alive in 63.<sup>5</sup> He seems to have attained to a great age. St Charles Borromeo, in his sixth provincial council in 1582, appointed his festival a holiday of obligation. Nicholas Sormani, a priest of the Oblates, maintains that he preached at Milan,<sup>6</sup> and St Charles Borromeo, in a sermon,<sup>7</sup> styles him the apostle of Milan.<sup>8</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 11 :*

ST BARNABAS, apostle and martyr, in Milan : ST TOCHUMRA in Ireland, virgin, titular saint of Tochumra in Munster : and another Irish saint of this name in the Diocese of Kilmore, also much honoured in Ireland and invoked by women in labour.

<sup>1</sup> Coloss. iv. 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 11.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 6.

<sup>4</sup> St Chrys. Hom. 11, in Coloss.

<sup>5</sup> Theod. lect. ii. p. 557; Suidas.

<sup>6</sup> St Car. Borr. Hom. 26, t. i. p. 174.

<sup>7</sup> Sormani in Apologismis.

<sup>8</sup> See Bernard Cassinus in his *Veritas Sacrarum Reliquiarum in Basilica Metropolitana Mediolanensi*, an. 1743.

JUNE 12

ST JOHN OF SAHAGUN, CONFESSOR, HERMIT OF THE  
ORDER OF ST AUGUSTINE

(A.D. 1479)

ST JOHN, son of John Gonzalez of Castrillo, was a native of Sahagun or St Fagondez, in the kingdom of Leon in Spain. He went through the course of his studies in the schools of the Benedictin monks of St Fagondez, and no sooner had he received the ecclesiastical tonsure than his father procured him a small benefice. The Bishop of Burgos took him shortly after into his family and preferred him to a canonry, though the Abbot of St Fagondez had already put him in possession of three small benefices. The pretence for this plurality was the incompetency of the livings for the maintenance of the incumbent. John had lived always blameless in his morals, and his life had an appearance of virtue above the general bulk of Christians. But the divine grace opening his eyes, he at length discovered many errors in his conduct and set himself seriously to reform them. The first step he took was to extort, by repeated importunity, leave from the Bishop of Burgos to resign his church livings, reserving only one chapel in which he every day said mass, often preached, and catechized the ignorant. He lived in the strictest evangelical poverty and mortification, retired from the world, and began by serious consideration to take a view of himself and of the state of his soul. He learned by experience that pious reading, meditation, and prayer afford a purer joy than all the train of wordly pleasures can give. Having at length procured his bishop's consent, he repaired to Salamanca, where he applied himself during four years to the study of theology. After which term he attended the care of souls in the parish church of St Sebastian, and frequently preached with wonderful zeal and fruit. In the meantime he lived with a virtuous canon, and inured himself to the practice of great austerities during nine years, till he was obliged to be cut for the stone. As soon as he had recovered his health after the operation, he took the religious habit among the hermits of St Austin, in Salamanca, in 1463. In his noviciate he appeared already a perfect master in a spiritual life, and made his solemn vows on the 28th of August, in 1464. He so perfectly attained the spirit of his rule that no one was more mortified, more obedient, more humble, or more disengaged from creatures than he appeared to be in all his actions. Being commanded to employ his talents in preaching, he delivered from the pulpit the word of God with such energy and force as discovered how much his understanding was enlightened and his heart filled with the holy maxims of the gospel. By his pathetic sermons and private exhortations he introduced an entire reforma-

tion of manners throughout the whole city, and extinguished the most inveterate feuds and animosities, which, especially among the noblemen, produced daily bad effects; for, by the spirit of meekness with which he was endued, he had a particular talent in reconciling enemies and in appeasing dissensions. Those whom he found full of bitterness against their neighbour he inspired with the love of peace and charity, and taught them to seek no other revenge than that of forgiving all injuries and of overcoming enmity by benefits.

Being appointed master of the novices, he discharged that important office with extraordinary prudence and sweetness. In 1471 he was chosen prior of his convent, which was a house famous for the severity of its discipline and for maintaining the true spirit of the Order. The saint was sensible that all advice and precepts are ineffectual when they are not supported by example, and thought it his duty to conduct his religious in the path of perfect virtue more by example than by authority. The high opinion which everyone had of his sanctity contributed to give the greatest weight to his words and example. Our saint, by his purity of heart and eminent spirit of prayer, was prepared to receive of God a singular prudence and gift of discerning spirits. He was favoured with an extraordinary light in penetrating the recesses of the hearts of penitents. He heard the confessions of all who presented themselves; but was severe in deferring absolution to habitual sinners, and to ecclesiastics who did not live according to the spirit of their most holy profession. He said mass with a devotion that exceedingly edified all that were present. Without respect of persons he reproved vice in the great ones with a liberty which often drew upon him severe persecutions. A certain duke, whom he had exasperated by his charitable exhortations to forbear provoking heaven by the oppression of his vassals, sent two assassins to murder him; but at the sight of the holy man the ruffians were struck with remorse, and casting themselves at his feet begged pardon for their crime. The duke falling sick, humbly testified to the saint his sincere repentance, and by his prayers and blessing recovered his health. St John being visited with his last sickness, foretold his death, and happily slept in the Lord on the 11th of June 1479. He was glorified by many miracles both before and after his death, beatified by Pope Clement VIII in 1601, and canonized by Alexander VIII in 1690. Benedict XIII commanded an office in his honour to be inserted in the Roman Breviary on the 12th of June.

The example of the saints teaches us that there is nothing to be got for virtue in a life of dissipation. Worldly conversation, which turns on vanity and trifling amusements, insensibly takes off the bend of the mind towards virtue, and the constitution of the soul is hereby impaired no less



than that of the body is by means destructive of its health. Every good Christian ought from time to time to retire from the world to be alone, and to have regular hours for pious reading and consideration. "Reflection," says St Bernard, "is the eye of the soul: it lets light and truth into it." The divine wisdom says, "I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart."<sup>1</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 12 :*

ST BASILIDES, ST QUIRINUS, ST NABOR, and ST NAZARIUS, martyrs; they were soldiers in the army of Maxentius honourably mentioned in the martyrology of St Bede: ST ESKILL, Bishop and martyr in Sweden, an Englishman by birth: ST JOHN OF SAHAGUN, hermit, of the Order of St Augustine: ST ONUPHRIUS, lived in an austere monastery of one hundred monks, near Thebes, but, desiring to imitate St John the Baptist, he became a hermit and lived sixty years retired from the world: and ST TERNAN, Bishop of the Picts, who sanctified himself in the Abbey of Culross, where St Kentigern had established a very holy way of life.

JUNE 13

ST ANTONY OF PADUA, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1231)

[His genuine life has received several interpolations from popular reports of no authority. But Wadding's Annals of his Order furnish us with good memoirs relating to his life and actions. See the judicious notes of the Bollandists, *Acta Sanctorum Junii*, t. ii. p. 706; Ragnaud, t. viii. *Mic. Ant. Bibl. Hisp. and Andreich.*]

ST ANTONY, though a native of Lisbon in Portugal, received his surname from his long residence at Padua, which city is possessed of the treasure of his relics. He was born in 1195 and christened by the name of Ferdinand, which he changed for that of Antony when he entered the Order of St Francis, out of devotion to the great patriarch of monks, who was the titular saint of the little chapel of his Order in which he took the habit. His father was Martin de Bullones, an officer in the army of Alphonsus I, surnamed El Consultador, who having defeated five kings of the Moors in the battle of Orique in 1139, was crowned King of Portugal and died in 1185. This prince's father, Henry of Burgundy, grandson of Robert, King of France, had begun the conquest of that country, but never took the title of king. The mother of our saint was Mary of Tevera, one of the most accomplished of women. Both his parents were equally distinguished by their nobility and virtue. They placed their son very young in the community of the canons of the Cathedral of Lisbon, where his rising genius was carefully cultivated, and from his tender years he always advanced both in knowledge and devotion. At fifteen years of age he entered among the regular canons of St Austin, near Lisbon; but not bearing the interruption and distraction which the visits of his friends there gave him, he desired two years after to be sent to the convent of the Holy Cross of the same Order at Coïmbra, a hundred

<sup>1</sup> Osee ii. 14.

miles from the former city. The close retirement and the austerity in which he there lived astonished his brethren, whilst he pursued his studies and read assiduously the holy scriptures and fathers. By his regular method and application, and by his sound and piercing judgment, he made a quick progress, and, together with a profound knowledge of theology, acquired a perfect habit of nervous and convincing eloquence. In the meantime he inflamed his devotion by assiduous prayer and holy meditation, and nourished daily in his soul the strongest sentiments and affections of piety, without which means the heart is left spiritually dry, the usual consequence of studies, whether sacred or profane, unless prayer imparts to them its unction. But the saint was called by God to serve him with greater fervour, and to be the ornament and support of another illustrious rising Order of religious men.

He had lived at Coimbra near eight years when Don Pedro, Infant of Portugal, brought over from Morocco the relics of the five Franciscans who had been lately there crowned with martyrdom. Ferdinand was strongly affected at the sight, and conceived an ardent desire to lay down his life for Christ. Shortly after, certain Franciscan friars came to his monastery of the Holy Cross to beg an alms for their community. Ferdinand discovered to them his inclination to embrace their institute, and was by them encouraged to put it in execution. No sooner was this known among the canons but they endeavoured to dissuade him from such a resolution, and he suffered much from their raileries and bitter reproaches. But he rejoiced in humiliations, and he began by them to learn to overcome himself and to root out of his heart all lurking poison of pride. Whilst he examined his vocation and begged the direction of the Holy Ghost, he found his resolution every day to gain new strength from the esteem he conceived for an Order which inspired an eminent spirit of martyrdom, and still enjoyed the direction and living example of its holy founder. Its poverty and austerities had also charms to him. Having therefore obtained the consent of his prior, he received this new habit in 1221 in the little Franciscan convent dedicated to the great St Antony, patriarch of the monks, near Coimbra. After some time spent in solitude, prayer, and penitential austerities, burning with a desire of martyrdom, he obtained leave to go into Africa to preach the gospel to the Moors. He was scarce arrived there when God, satisfied with the sacrifice of his heart, visited him with a severe fit of illness, which obliged him to return to Spain for the re-establishment of his health. But by contrary winds the vessel on which he was embarked was driven to Sicily and touched at Messina, where he was informed that St Francis was then holding a general chapter at Assisium. Sick and weak as he was, the desire of seeing the holy founder of his Order carried him to Assisium. When he had seen St Francis he desired to cultivate the happiness which he enjoyed in the

company of the saint; and in order to stay nearer his person, offered himself to the provincials and guardians of Italy. St Francis approved his inclination to renounce his friends and country; but not one of the superiors there assembled would be troubled with him, so unpromising and sickly was his aspect; for he took care to conceal his learning and talents, and presented himself only to serve in the kitchen. At last a guardian in the province of Romagna, named Gratiani, took pity of him and sent him to the hermitage of Mount-Paul, a little solitary convent near Bologna. Antony thought of nothing but of burying himself here in obscurity unknown to the world, joining the sweets of heavenly contemplation with the austerities of a penitential life and the humiliations of such a state. He never let fall one word which might show his learning, much less anything of the sublime communications of his soul with God; but listened to everybody and only spoke to them when obliged, till an accident made him known to the world. An assembly of the neighbouring Dominican and Franciscan friars was held at Forli, in which the Dominicans as strangers were desired to make an exhortation to the company. They all excused themselves, everyone saying that he was not prepared. Then St Antony's guardian ordered him to speak, and to say whatever the Holy Ghost should put in his mouth. The saint begged to be excused, alleging that he had been only used to wash the dishes in the kitchen and to sweep the house; but the superior insisting upon his compliance, he spoke with such eloquence, erudition, and unction as astonished the whole company. He was at that time about twenty-six years old.

St Francis was informed of the discovery of this hidden treasure in his Order and sent him to Vercelli, there to apply himself to the study of theology, and after a short time to teach the sacred sciences; yet recommending him to make the assiduous exercise of contemplation and prayer his principal employment, lest his studies should otherwise extinguish in him the spirit of devotion and piety. St Francis's letter was couched in the following terms: "To my most dear brother Antony, Friar Francis wishes health in Jesus Christ. It seemeth good to me that you should read sacred theology to the friars, yet so that you do not prejudice yourself by too great earnestness in studies; and be careful that you do not extinguish in yourself or in them the spirit of holy prayer." St Antony taught divinity some years with great applause at Bologna, Toulouse, Montpellier, and Padua, and was appointed guardian at Limoges. In all these employments he never made use of the general dispensation allowed to professors of an exemption from any of the regular duties of his community, and he found time to preach assiduously to the people. He at length forsook the schools to apply himself wholly to the functions of a missionary preacher; for he thought the conversion of souls from vice and the reformation of manners called for his whole attention and zeal.

He was perfectly versed in the holy scriptures, had an excellent talent of applying them to the purpose on all occasions, and displayed in a clear light and with inexpressible energy the genuine sense and the spirit and marrow of the sacred text. But what made his eloquence most prevailing and rendered it like a torrent of fire which bore down all before it was the unction with which he spoke; for his heart being filled with the warmest and most feeling sentiments of every virtue, he poured these forth with an energy and zeal that seemed irresistible. His words were so many darts which pierced the hearts of his hearers; for he had long treasured up by the exercises of humility, silence, mortification, contemplation, and prayer what he afterwards communicated to his hearers; and his soul was itself all flame before he endeavoured to kindle the fire of divine love in others. Full of a sovereign contempt of the world and himself, and burning with a desire to die for Jesus Christ, and to see his pure love reign in all hearts, he was above the reach of all temptations which could warp his integrity, or make him weaken or disguise the maxims of the gospel, which he announced with equal dignity and zeal to the great ones and the small. The learned admired the loftiness of his thoughts and the strong images with which he painted the most sublime mysteries and added an unspeakable dignity to the most obvious and common truths of religion and morality; yet a natural simplicity rendered all his discourses no less intelligible and easy to the most vulgar understandings. Charity and prudence took off the edge of harshness from his reprehensions, and his very reproofs were not bitter or austere, but amiable and insinuating. Whilst he beat down presumptuous sinners by the terrors of the divine judgments, he at the same time took care to raise and encourage their sinking souls by confidence in divine goodness and mercy. He opposed the fashionable vices and growing heresies of those times with equal vigour and success. The most obstinate heretics and the most hardened sinners threw themselves at his feet, declaring themselves conquered. Pope Gregory IX hearing him preach at Rome in 1227, in his surprise figuratively called him The Ark of the Covenant, or rich spiritual treasure. The sanctity and severity of his life gave also great weight to his words. Such was the gravity of his countenance and the edifying modesty of his deportment that he seemed to preach by every action. Having once invited a brother to go out with him to preach, he returned to his convent without making any sermon to the people. His companion asked him why he had not preached. "We have done it," said the saint, "by our modest looks and by the gravity of our behaviour." The frequent miracles which were performed by him much enhanced the reputation of his eminent sanctity wherever he came. The crowds were everywhere so great at his sermons that he was often obliged to preach in market-places or fields. He travelled through cities, towns,

and villages with an unwearied zeal, and preached in France, Spain, and Italy. When he was one day going to begin his sermon to a most numerous assembly in the fields in France, the sky was on a sudden covered with thick clouds, and violent claps of thunder presaged a dreadful storm. The people began to disperse and run to the neighbouring city. But the saint encouraged them to stay, and by his prayers obtained that the audience, as if they had been covered with an invisible canopy, felt nothing of the dreadful shower of rain and hail, whilst the neighbouring fields and highways were covered with a deluge.

The saint was no less admirable in the confessional and in the private direction of souls than in the pulpit. Wherever he came, dissensions and animosities were extinguished, usurers restored their unjust gains, sinners melted into tears at his discourses, and by their sobs often interrupted his sermons, and everyone sought his particular advice for the direction of his own conscience and conduct. In Lombardy, for the protection of the oppressed people, he put his life in the hands of one of the most furious of tyrants. Ezzelino, a native of the marquise of Treviso, but of German extraction, having put himself at the head of a party of the Gibellins or Imperialists, made himself master of Verona, Padua, and several other cities in Lombardy, and exercised in them the most horrible tyranny during forty years. He contemned the anathemas of Gregory IX, Innocent IV, and Alexander IV. Hearing that the citizens of Padua had revolted from him, he put to death in one day twelve thousand persons of that country. The city of Verona, which was the place of his residence, had lost most of its inhabitants, and was filled with his guards, whose terrible armour added fierceness to their savage countenances. The saint, who feared no danger in the cause of God and his neighbour, went boldly to Verona. He found the streets solitary and mournful, and advancing to the palace desired an audience of the prince. Being introduced into his chamber, he saw him seated on a throne, surrounded by his troop of murderers, who stood armed ready to execute his bloody orders the instant they were issued. Antony, no way dismayed, told the tyrant that his murders, sacrileges, and plunders called to heaven for vengeance upon his head, and that those whom he had slain or oppressed were witnesses before God against him. The saint said many things to the same purpose, and the guards waited every moment to hear the tyrant command him to be cut to pieces. But to their great astonishment he descended from his throne pale and trembling, and putting his girdle round his neck for a halter, cast himself at the feet of the humble servant of God, and with many tears begged him to intercede with God for the pardon of his sins. The saint lifted him up and gave him suitable advice to do penance. Some time afterwards he sent a great present to St Antony, which the holy man refused to accept, saying the only agreeable present the prince

could make him would be to restore to the poor what he had unjustly taken from them. Ezzelino seemed for some time to change his conduct, but after the death of the saint relapsed into his former disorders. At length, being taken prisoner by the confederate princes of Lombardy in 1259, he died distracted in close confinement.

St Antony, when invested with several dignities in his Order, was watchful to maintain the primitive spirit and regularity in the houses under his inspection. He saw it almost in its birth exposed to imminent danger, and saved it by his zeal and prudence. St Francis dying in 1226, brother Elias, a man of a worldly spirit, was chosen general; who, abusing his authority, began to introduce several relaxations of the rule, which tended to the ruin of its fundamental constitutions and spirit. He built a church too magnificent for the poverty which the rule required and professed, applied money to his own private use, bought himself a horse, kept servants, ate in his own chamber, and had better fare than the community prepared for him. Most of the provincials and guardians, out of human respects, were gained to his way of thinking; and the rest, who saw that the tendency of such an innovation was to open a door to relaxations which must necessarily extinguish the spirit and glory of the Order, had not courage to speak against it. Only St Antony and an Englishman, named Adam, boldly opposed and condemned these abuses; but were loaded with injuries and ill-treatment, and only by flight escaped perpetual imprisonment in their cells, which the general, with several provincials, decreed against them as turbulent and seditious men. They addressed themselves to Pope Gregory IX, by whom they were graciously received and heard. His holiness summoned Elias to appear before him at Rome, and having examined into the abuses by him introduced, deposed him from the generalship. Antony was at that time Provincial of Romagna; but took this occasion to extort by importunities license from the pope to resign that post and also to leave the court, where his holiness earnestly desired to detain him. He retired first to Mount Alverno; thence returned to his convent at Padua, which he had pitched upon for his abode some time before he was Provincial of Romagna, and where he had formerly taught divinity and preached. After his return he again preached the Lent there with such fruit that the whole city seemed changed by his sermons. Then it was that he put the last hand to the Latin sermons, which we have, though not as he preached them; for he diversified them according to circumstances, and spoke as the ardour of his soul directed him. They are no more than general heads or commonplaces, destitute of the ornaments and flowers which he added in speaking.

When Lent was over, St Antony being much spent with labour and his penitential life, finding also his health and strength declining very fast under an inward decay, he desired to give himself some interval between

business and eternity. He therefore retired out of town to a solitary place called Campietro, or Field of Peter, there to attend solely to himself and God, and by fervent prayer to dispose his soul for the enjoyment of God; for he knew that his earthly pilgrimage was drawing to an end, and that he was then called to receive the reward of his labours. He took with him into his solitude two companions, men of great virtue. His distemper increasing very much upon him, he desired to be carried back to his convent in Padua; but the crowds of people pressing to kiss the hem of his habit were so great and so troublesome that he stopped in the suburbs and was laid in the chamber of the director of the nuns of Arcela, where, having received the rites of the church with many tears, he recited the seven penitential psalms and a hymn in honour of the Blessed Virgin till he gave up his happy soul to him who had created it for his own great glory, on the 13th of June 1231, being only thirty-six years old, of which he had lived ten in the Order of St Francis. At the first news of his departure the children ran about the streets crying out, "The saint is dead!" Innumerable miracles testified his sanctity, and he was immediately canonized by Pope Gregory IX in 1232, whose bull was dated at Spoleto. That pope had been personally acquainted with the saint and was a great admirer of his virtues. Thirty-two years after his death a stately church was built in Padua for his Order, and his remains were translated into it. The flesh was all consumed except the tongue, which was found incorrupt, red, and as fresh as it was whilst he was living. St Bonaventure, who was then general of the Order and present at this ceremony, took it into his hands, and bathing it with his tears, and kissing it with great devotion, said, "O blessed tongue, that didst always praise God, and hast been the cause that an infinite number learned to praise Him: now it appears how precious thou art before Him who framed thee to be employed in so excellent and high a function." Pope Gregory IX, in the bull of his canonization, says: "We therefore commanded the said bishop (of Padua), brother Jordan, Prior of St Bennet's, and brother John, Prior of St Austin's, a monastery of the Dominicans in Padua, to make diligent scrutiny into the miracles wrought at his sepulchre, and into the merits of his life. Having seen the authentic proofs of the miracles of the aforesaid venerable man, besides what we know ourselves of his holy life and conversation, of which we have had experience, we, by the advice of our brethren, together with all the prelates with us, have enrolled him in the number of the saints." He had said before in the same bull: "St Antony, residing now in heaven, is honoured on earth by many miracles daily seen at his tomb, of which we are certified by authentic writings."

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 13:*

ST ANTONY OF PADUA: ST DAMENADE, virgin, in Ireland famed for her extraordinary gift of miracles, titular saint of Fermanagh: and BLESSED THOMAS WOODHOUSE, martyr.

JUNE 14

ST BASIL THE GREAT, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP  
OF CÆSAREA

(A.D. 379)

[From his own works, and the panegyrics and funeral discourses compiled by St Gregory of Nyssa, St Gregory Nazianzen, St Amphilochius, and St Ephrem, all his intimate acquaintance; and from the church historians. See Hermant, Tillemont, Cave, &c.; also Jos. Assemani in *Calend. Univ.* ad 1 Jan. t. vi. p. 4.]

ST BASIL the Great, the illustrious doctor and intrepid champion of the church, was born towards the close of the year 329 at Cæsarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia. His parents were Cappadocians by birth, both equally illustrious for their nobility and descended from a long line of renowned heroes. But his father was by extraction from Pontus, where his ancestors had long flourished. St Macrina, his grandmother by the father's side, and her pious husband, whose name has not reached us, suffered the confiscation of their estates and torments almost to death for the faith in the reign of Maximinus II in 311. Another time, escaping by flight, they lived seven years concealed in the great forests of Pontus, where they were wonderfully fed by stags, as St Gregory Nazianzen assures us.<sup>1</sup> Our saint's father, St Basil the Elder, and his wife, St Emmelia, adorned the conjugal state by their saintly conversation. Their marriage was blessed with ten children, of which they left nine living, all eminent for virtue; those that were married and lived in the world seeming no way inferior in piety to those who served God in holy virginity, as St Gregory Nazianzen tells us. Four were sons and the other five daughters. St Macrina was the eldest of all these children, and assisted her mother in training up the rest in perfect virtue. The eldest among the boys was St Basil; the other three were Naucratus, St Gregory of Nyssa, and St Peter of Sebaste. Our saint was the fruit of his mother's prayers, and in his infancy by the same means recovered his health in a dangerous sickness, when he had been given over by the physicians, as St Gregory of Nyssa relates. He received the first tincture of virtue from his grandmother, St Macrina the Elder, under whose care he passed his infancy in a country house near Neocæsarea, in Pontus; and he testifies himself that during his whole life he never forgot the strong impressions of piety which her exhortations and holy example made upon his tender mind. His father, who was the common master of eloquence and piety in Pontus, taught him the first elements of literature, but died about the year 349, soon after the birth of St Peter of Sebaste. He lived sometimes at Cæsarea, where our saint was born and where the sciences flourished; and after his decease the young Basil was sent to that great

<sup>1</sup> Or. 20.



city for the sake of the schools. He was then only ten or twelve years old; but he far outstripped his age in the proficiency which he made in learning, and still more by the fervour with which he daily advanced in piety and devotion. He was judged equal in oratory to the best masters in that country when he removed to Constantinople, where Libanius, a heathen, the most celebrated rhetorician of that age and one of the first men of the empire, gave public lectures with the greatest applause. This professor was charmed with the abilities, gravity, and virtue of his scholar. He testifies in his epistles that he was in raptures as often as he heard him speak in public. He ever after kept an epistolary correspondence with him, and gave him constant marks of the highest esteem and veneration.<sup>1</sup> When Basil had made himself master of whatever the schools of Cæsarea and Constantinople were able to teach him, the same laudable thirst after useful learning carried him to Athens.

St Basil, who had first met and contracted an intimacy with St Gregory Nazianzen at Cæsarea, was overjoyed to find so worthy a friend at Athens in 352. St Gregory, who was arrived there a little before, had credit enough to procure his friend a welcome reception, and the great reputation and gravity of Basil protected him from the rude treatment with which the scholars were wont to receive new comers.<sup>2</sup> A sympathy of inclinations, an equal ardour for virtue and learning, and a mutual esteem for each other's piety and great qualities, formed between the two saints a friendship which was not founded in a light and variable affection, but in rooted love and motives of true virtue. Hence no jealousy, envy, impatience, or other passion was ever able to impair the union of their hearts, which was not like the passions of youth, resembling a spring flower which quickly fades, and founded only in base interest, sense, or pleasure. They had no other interest or desire than to consecrate themselves entirely to God, and to be to each other a mutual comfort, spur, and assistance in attaining to this great end. No passion more easily betrays youth than that of sensual fondness begun under the sacred name of friendship; nor is there anything in which they are to be more strongly upon their guard against themselves, lest what at first seems virtue terminate in passion. This holy pair of perfect friends, by their reservedness, watchfulness, confirmed habit of mortification of their senses, and assiduous prayer, maintained themselves free from the dangerous snares which the enemy of souls never fails to throw in the way on such occasions. They conversed together with such gravity that they might have seemed angels destitute of bodies. With this regard over themselves, they enjoyed all the support and succour which holy friendship in God is capable of affording to pious souls. They had the same lodging and the same table; they pursued the same employments, and seemed to have but one will. All things

<sup>1</sup> Libanius, apud St Basilium, Ep. 145, 152.

<sup>2</sup> Naz. Or. 20.

were common betwixt them, and in all they did they had both this only view, which they made the whole endeavour of all their actions, that watching or sleeping, in solitude or in company, at work or in study, fasting or taking necessary refreshment, or whatever else they did, they might live only to glorify God, continually adore and honour with all their faculties the Divine Being and do his will. All their fervour and watchfulness could not have been able to secure their innocence had they not carefully shunned the rock of bad company, which St Gregory particularly remarks:<sup>1</sup> "Neither did we," says he, "keep company with scholars that were impious, rude, or impudent; but with those that were the best and the most peaceable, and those whose conversation brought us much profit; being persuaded that it is an illusion to seek the company of sinners on pretence to reform or convert them: it is far more to be feared they will communicate their poison to us." A most important precept to all men, especially to youth; the neglect of which is the ruin of the strongest virtue and renders abortive all the care and instructions of the most zealous parents and pastors, and all the fruit of the best education. St Gregory adds of himself and his friend: "We knew only two streets, and chiefly the first of these which led us to the church and to the holy teachers and doctors who there attended the service of the altar, and nourished the flock of Christ with the food of life. The other street with which we were acquainted, but which we held in much less esteem, was the road to the schools, and to our masters in the sciences. We left to others the streets which led to the theatre, to spectacles, feasting, and diversions. We made it our only and great affair: it was our only aim and all our glory, to be called and to be Christians."

Everyone who is called to the care of souls is bound to exert his utmost efforts to qualify himself to publish to men the great truths of salvation with a dignity that becomes the great importance of that function, which is the first, the principal, and the most indispensable duty of every pastor, and on which depends the salvation of most of the souls that are committed to his care. Basil and Nazianzen in this view applied themselves to the study of oratory, and, imitating the industry of a Thucydides or a Demosthenes, they with incredible pains formed their style upon the best models.

St Basil excelled likewise in poesy, philosophy, and every other branch of literature. By many observations on natural philosophy scattered in his works, especially in his book, *On the Creation, or work of six days*, called *Hexaëmeron*, it appears that his skill in the history of nature was more just and more extensive than that of Aristotle, notwithstanding the helps which the treasures of an Alexander were able to procure him. In logic, such were his superior abilities and dexterity that it would have

<sup>1</sup> Naz. Or. 20.

been more easy for a man to draw himself out of a labyrinth than to extricate himself from the web in which this great doctor entangled his adversaries by the force of his reasoning, says St Gregory. After his preparatory studies, he applied himself to the assiduous meditation of the Holy Scriptures, that inexhausted fund of heavenly sentiments and knowledge. He seasoned his other studies with the assiduous reading of the works of the fathers. Thus did our great doctor enrich himself with that precious treasure, with which he stored his mind, and qualified himself in so excellent a manner for the ministry of the divine word and the advancement of piety.

Basil was soon regarded at Athens as an oracle, both in sacred and profane learning. Both masters and students used their utmost endeavours to fix him among them; but he thought it incumbent upon him rather to serve his own country. Wherefore, leaving St Gregory some time behind him, he went from Athens in 355 and repaired to Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, where, being yet young, he opened a school of oratory. He was also prevailed upon to plead at the bar; these being, in that age, the principal employs in which young orators and noblemen showed their abilities and improved themselves in the art of speaking. Philosophy had already raised Basil above ambition, and he contemned posts of honour and all the glittering advantages with which the world flattered him. He had always led a most virtuous and regular life, and sought only the kingdom of God. Yet seeing himself received by his countrymen with the greatest applause, everyone testifying the highest esteem for his person and endowments, he felt his heart secretly assaulted by a temptation to vainglory and a lurking satisfaction in the empty esteem of men. The danger of this enemy made him tremble for his soul; and he shortly after determined entirely to renounce the world, in order to remove himself further from its precipices. The zealous exhortations of his devout sister Macrina and his friend Nazianzen contributed not a little to strengthen him in this heroic resolution, and instil into his soul a love of holy poverty and a contempt of human glory, with a relish for the more sublime philosophy of perfect virtue. By their advice he gave away the greatest part of his estate to the poor; and, rousing himself as from a lethargy, he began to behold the true light of heavenly wisdom, and thoroughly to understand the emptiness of worldly science and all human things. In these dispositions he embraced the penitential and laborious state of a poor monk. St Basil and his friend St Gregory, among the things which they forsook in renouncing the world, often enumerate eloquence, but mean the gaudy trimmings and empty delicacies of that art, which only please the ear; or they speak of the profane use of eloquence, to renounce which, especially in that age, was certainly a great sacrifice. For both by their example and works they condemn those Christian preachers who, pretending to

imitate the inspired apostles, cover their laziness and ignorance with a contemptuous disdain of the art of eloquence. "After having forsaken the world," says St Gregory, "I have reserved only eloquence; and I do not repent the pains and fatigue I have suffered by sea and land in order to attain it. I could wish for my own sake and that of my friends that we possessed all its force."<sup>1</sup> And in another place,<sup>2</sup> "This alone remains of what I once possessed; and I offer, devote, and consecrate it entire to my God. Being a minister of the gospel, I devote myself solely to the duty of preaching; I embrace it as my lot, and will never forsake it."<sup>3</sup>

St Basil, reflecting that the name of a monk would be his more heavy condemnation unless he faithfully fulfilled the obligations of that state, in 357 travelled over Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, and visited the most celebrated monasteries and hermits of the deserts in those countries, carefully instructing himself in all the duties and exercises of a monastic life. He was much edified by the example of those holy men, who by all their actions showed that they regarded themselves as travellers on earth and citizens of heaven; and their conversation very much encouraged him to fervour in his resolution. In all his travels he was careful to choose only those for fathers and guides of his soul in the paths of heaven whose faith was conformable to that of the Catholic Church, as he assures us. In 358 he returned into Cappadocia, and was ordained Reader by Dianæus, the old Bishop of Cæsarea, by whom he had formerly been baptized. This prelate professed himself a Catholic, but had been unwarily seduced into some false steps in favour of the Arians. He had joined the Eusebians at Antioch in 341, and at Sardica, or Philippopolis, in 347; and when the Council of Rimini in 359 had omitted the word *Consubstantial* in its decree, which the emperor had compelled the oriental bishops to subscribe, Dianæus had the weakness to comply. This was a sensible affliction to Basil, who respected him as his pastor, and had found him an affable and grave man. But union in faith prevailing more with the saint than any other ties, he upon this subscription separated himself from his communion. The saint left Cappadocia in 358, and retired into Pontus to the house of his grandmother, situated on the banks of the river Iris. His mother Emmelia and his sister Macrina had there founded a nunnery, which was at that time governed by the latter. St Basil established a monastery of men on the opposite side of the river, which he governed five years, till in 362 he resigned the abbacy to his brother, St Peter of Sebaste. About seven or eight furlongs from the Monastery of St Macrina stood the Church of the Forty Martyrs, enriched with an ample portion of their relics, and famous in the writings of St Basil and his friends. The place was not far from Neocæsarea. St Basil founded several other monasteries, both of men and women, in different parts of Pontus, which

<sup>1</sup> Or. 3.<sup>2</sup> Or. 12.<sup>3</sup> St Basil, Ep. 204.

he continued to superintend even when he was bishop. For their direction he drew up his ascetic works, which consist chiefly of his Longer and Shorter Rules for cenobites or monks who live in community: in them he prefers the cenobitic life to the eremitical, as generally the more secure; he inculcates frequently that a monk ought to manifest to his superior all that passes most secret in his soul, and submit himself in all things to his direction; he orders that monks exercise hospitality to strangers, but without providing for them any dainty fare, which he says is as absurd as if they should have better clothes than their ordinary habits to receive them in; and adds this remark, that an austere diet would rid them of the trouble of idle visitants of a worldly spirit, which a neglect of this advice would invite. He says the table of a monk ought to teach even strangers sobriety.<sup>1</sup> He mentions and excellently recommends each canonical hour of prayer, and, though some have denied it, that of *Prime*,<sup>2</sup> by which we consecrate the first fruits of our thoughts to God, and fill our hearts before all other things with thoughts of God and with his holy joy.<sup>3</sup> The Monastic Constitutions which are ascribed to St Basil differ from these two rules in several articles, and are not ascribed to this father by any ancient author. Ceillier thinks them of somewhat a later date. The rule of St Basil is universally followed to this day by all the oriental monks, even by those who call themselves of the Order of St Antony.

We have the truest image of this great patriarch in the glass which he holds to us in his writings; and it would be doing an injury to virtue not to give some kind of portraiture of him in his retired life, which has been the model upon which in every succeeding age many eminent saints have formed themselves in perfect virtue. He never had more than one tunic and one coat; lay on the ground; sometimes watched whole nights, and never made use of a bath, which before the use of linen, and in hot climates, was a very rare and extraordinary denial. He wore a long hair-cloth in the night, but not by day, that it might be concealed from men. He inured himself to bear the sharpest cold, which in the mountains of Pontus is very severe; and he never allowed himself the refreshment of any other fire than the heat of the sun. His only repast in the day was on bread and clear water, except that on festivals he added a few herbs; and so sparing were his meals that he seemed almost to live without nourishment. St Gregory of Nyssa compares his abstinence to the fast of Elias, who ate nothing for forty days; and St Gregory Nazianzen facetiously banters him upon his excessive paleness, that his body scarce seemed to have any life;<sup>4</sup> and in another place he says<sup>5</sup> that he was without a wife, without estate or goods, without flesh, and seemingly without

<sup>1</sup> *Regulæ fusius explicatæ*, Reg. 20.

<sup>2</sup> As Ceillier demonstrates, t. vi. p. 184, against Bulteau, lib. ii. *Hist. Mon. de l'Orient*.

<sup>3</sup> *Regulæ fusius explicatæ*, Reg. 37.

<sup>4</sup> *Naz. Ep.* 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Orat.* 19.

blood. The saint himself testifies that he treated his body as a slave which was ever ready to revolt unless continually kept under with a severe hand. From his epistles, it appears that he was subject to frequent and almost perpetual infirmities. In one, he says that in his best state of health he was weaker than patients that are given over by the physicians usually are.<sup>1</sup> His interior mortification of the will, and his profound humility, were far more wonderful. We have a proof of this latter in his constant desire to bury himself as much as possible in solitude, and to live unknown to men. In his letters he ascribes all the calamities of the world to his own sins. Solitude did not render him austere or morose to others; he always seemed the mildest and most patient of men. Libanius, the pagan philosopher, admired nothing in him so much as his astonishing meekness and sweetness towards all; which yet he tempered with an amiable gravity. He was a great lover of chastity, and built several monasteries for virgins, to whom he gave a written rule. About the year 359 he sold the remainder of his estate for the benefit of the poor during a great famine. St Gregory Nazianzen assures us that he lived in the greatest poverty possible, and that his resolution was as firm as a rock amidst the waters. He cheerfully divested himself of all he possessed in the world that he might more securely pass through the dangerous sea of this life; for of all his temporal goods he did not reserve the least thing to himself; and even when he was bishop he was content to receive his subsistence from the charity of his friends. It was his riches to have no earthly goods, and to follow naked the cross of his Saviour, which was all his treasure. In every monastic exercise and virtue he strove to copy, and even outdo, the most perfect examples he had seen in the deserts of Syria and Egypt. In imitation of those monks, he wore a rough, coarse habit with a girdle, and shoes made of untanned leather; but he principally studied to practise the interior virtues of humility, penance, and mortification, of which the dress and manner of life were only the exterior marks or symbols.<sup>2</sup> He divided his time in the desert betwixt prayer, meditation on the Holy Scriptures, and manual labour. He also went frequently into the neighbouring country to instruct the peasants in the principles of their Holy faith, and to exhort them to the love of virtue.<sup>3</sup> One thing seemed at first wanting to him in his dear solitude, which was the company of St Gregory Nazianzen, without whom he seemed deprived of one half of himself. Being therefore delighted with the charms of his cell, he endeavoured to make his friend a partner in his happiness, and to procure to himself the comfort and assistance of his company and example. He therefore invited him by several letters to come to him. In one of these <sup>4</sup> he excellently describes the advantages of retirement for Holy prayer and

<sup>1</sup> St Basil, Ep. 257.<sup>2</sup> Ep. 79.<sup>3</sup> Sozom. lib. vi. c. 17.<sup>4</sup> Ep. 2, ed Benedict. olim Ep. 1

the perfect subduing of the passions. He defines a monk one whose prayer is continual, who seasons his manual labour with that holy exercise, particularly with singing the psalms, whose heart is always lifted up to God, and whose only study it is to adorn his soul with virtues by assiduous meditation on the Holy Scriptures. He reduces the meals of a monk to one refection a day, and that on bread and water; and curtails his sleep by putting an end to it at midnight, and dedicating the rest of the night to prayer. He lays down rules for silence, modesty in exterior of dress and carriage, and the like. The two SS. Gregory assure us that our saint in this letter gives us a true portraiture of himself. Nazianzen complied, and followed Basil into his retirement in Pontus. That saint describes the extreme austerity of the life which they led in a poor open hovel, with a little barren garden which they cultivated.<sup>1</sup> The two saints pursued together their studies of the Holy Scriptures. But in 362 St Basil, taking with him some of his monks, returned to Cæsarea in Cappadocia.

Julian the Apostate ascending the imperial throne in 361, wrote to St Basil, whom he had known at Athens, and invited him to his court. The saint answered him that the state of life in which he was engaged rendered it impossible for him to comply with his desire. Julian dissembled his anger for the present; but when the saint was come to Cæsarea he again wrote to him, saying artfully that he had not altered his sentiments in his regard, though he had given him just reason for it; yet he ordered him to pay into his exchequer one thousand pounds of gold, threatening, in case of refusal, that he would level the city of Cæsarea to the ground.<sup>2</sup> The saint, no way moved at his threats, calmly replied that far from being able to raise so large a sum, he had not of his own enough to purchase himself subsistence for one day. He added boldly in his letter that he was surprised to see him neglect the essential duties of his crown, and provoke the anger of God by openly contemning his worship.<sup>3</sup> The emperor, enraged at this rebuke, marked out St Basil and St Gregory Nazianzen for victims to his resentment after his return from his Persian expedition, in which he himself perished in June 363. Dianæus, Bishop of Cæsarea, falling sick, sent for St Basil and protested to him that if he had signed the confession of Rimini, he had done it without knowing the evil which it contained, and that he never had any other faith than that which was agreeable to the Nicene council, to which he steadfastly adhered: upon which St Basil was reconciled to him. After his death, Eusebius, a layman, was advanced to that see; and some time after St Basil was by him ordained priest by compulsion, as St Gregory Nazianzen assures us, who wrote to him a letter of comfort and advice on that occasion.<sup>4</sup> Our saint continued the same manner of life in the city which he had led in the desert, except that to his other labours he added that of preaching

<sup>1</sup> Naz. Ep. 8.<sup>2</sup> St Bas. Ep. 207.<sup>3</sup> St Bas. Ep. 208.<sup>4</sup> Naz. Ep. 11.

assiduously to the people. He erected there a monastery for men and another for women. Eusebius, the bishop, who stood in need of such an eloquent and prudent assistant, had for that purpose raised him to the priesthood. Nevertheless, by a frailty incident to men who watch not carefully over their own hearts (by which expression of St Gregory Nazianzen we must understand a secret passion of jealousy), he afterwards fell out with him and removed him from his church. The people of Cæsarea and many bishops took part in favour of Basil against the bishop, but the saint, rejoicing to see himself again at liberty, privately withdrew and returned to his former retreat in Pontus, where he recovered again the company of St Gregory Nazianzen. This happened in 363. It is observed by some that St Basil for some time corresponded and communicated with Basil of Ancyra, Eustathius of Sebaste, and Silvanus of Tarsus, who became ringleaders among the Semi-Arians; but though they refused to admit the word *Consubstantial*, they at that time explained their sentiments in such a manner as to appear orthodox, especially with respect to the article of the divinity of the Son of God; and they showed great zeal against the Arians. Some of them denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, but concealed this error some time under ambiguous terms, pretending that they only disputed about certain expressions. Wherefore the conduct of St Athanasius and St Hilary, when they wrote their books on Synods, was the same towards them with that of St Basil.

Whilst our saint during three years breathed the sweet air of retirement, the empire was agitated by several revolutions. The Catholic Emperor Jovian dying in February 364, Valentinian was chosen to fill the imperial throne, who immediately named his brother Valens Emperor of the East. This latter suffered himself to be seduced into heresy by two profligate Arian bishops, Eudoxius of Constantinople and Euzoius of Antioch; and in 366 took a journey to Cæsarea, with the intent of putting the churches of that city into the hands of the Arians. St Basil had then lost St Gregory, and being invited back by his bishop Eusebius, and alarmed at the dangers of that church, he hastened to defend it against the persecution of heresy. Upon his arrival at Cæsarea he opposed the Arians with so much prudence and courage that after many attempts they were obliged to desist from their pretensions with shame and confusion. He was no less vigilant, by his zealous sermons, to instil into the faithful the most perfect maxims of virtue, reconcile all differences, and extinguish lawsuits. When violent hail and storms had destroyed the harvest, and a famine filled the country with desolation, the poor in their extreme necessity found relief in the boundless charity of Basil who, like another Joseph, opened for their abundant supply the coffers of the rich. He, with his own hands, distributed among them bread and other provisions, waited upon them at table with an apron before him, and with wonderful humility



washed their feet. By his deference, prudence, zeal, and charity he won the affection of Eusebius, who conceived the highest esteem for him, and made great use of his councils in all affairs. That prelate dying about the middle of the year 370, in the arms of Basil, the saint was chosen and consecrated archbishop of that metropolitical church. St Athanasius expressed an extraordinary joy at this promotion, which already announced the greatest victories over a triumphing heresy.

St Basil being placed in this dignity, seemed as much to surpass himself as he had before surpassed others. He preached to his people even on working days, both morning and evening. He established at Cæsarea many devout practices which he had seen observed in Egypt, Syria, and other places; as that of all meeting in the church to public morning prayer, and singing certain psalms together before sunrise, at which many assisted with the deepest compunction and with torrents of tears.<sup>1</sup> He testifies that the people then communicated at Cæsarea every Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and on all the feasts of the martyrs.<sup>2</sup> When the province was afflicted with a great drought, the good pastor prostrated himself in prayer before God till the scourge was removed, as his brother of Nyssa relates. If it be one of the principal duties of a bishop to look upon himself as the guardian and trustee of the poor, as St Justin styles him,<sup>3</sup> this charge St Basil most faithfully fulfilled. Besides his other excessive charities he founded a vast hospital, which Nazianzen calls a new city, which continued famous long after his time and was from him called Basiliades. The same author says that, "Having well considered it, he thought it might deservedly be reckoned among the miracles of the world; so numerous were the poor and sick that came thither, and so admirable was the care and order with which they were served." St Basil frequently visited it, comforted the patients, and instructed and preached to them. His compassion for the spiritual miseries of souls which vice, heresy, and schism seduced was to him a perpetual source of tears and sighs to the Father of Mercies in their behalf; and his zeal made him spare no pains and fear no dangers to apply all possible remedies to their evils. Of this we have a remarkable proof in the glorious triumph which he gained over the Emperor Valens.

That prince, seeing this saint stand as an impregnable tower, baffling all the efforts of his heresy, resolved to remove him out of the way. By several acts of violence and persecution he had already struck a terror into the orthodox pastors. Reeking with the blood of many martyrs, Valens passed like lightning through several provinces, blasting them with Arianism, and arrived in Cappadocia ready to dart his thunder upon the great Archbishop of Cæsarea, who alone stood more in his way than all the rest together. He sent before him the Prefect Modestus, with

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 63.<sup>2</sup> Ep. 289.<sup>3</sup> Apol. 1. ol. 2.

orders to prevail upon Basil, by threats or promises, to communicate with his Arians. Modestus being seated on his tribunal, attended by the lictors with their fasces, summoned St Basil to appear before him. The saint came with a cheerful and undaunted countenance. The prefect received him courteously, and with many smooth words endeavoured to bring him into a compliance with the emperor's desire.

The prefect could not but admire the saint's intrepidity; and going out the next day to meet the emperor, who was coming into the city, he informed him of what had passed between himself and Basil, and expressed his astonishment at his heroic courage. Valens, enraged at the miscarriage, would assist himself at a second trial of skill upon the holy confessor, together with Modestus, and an officer of his household called Demosthenes, the most insolent and brutish of men. Afterwards the prefect ventured upon a third attack; but the stout soldier of Christ acquired each time greater glory by his courage. So that Modestus, in the end, said to the emperor, "We are overcome: this man is above our threats." And Valens laid aside for that time all further attempts upon him. On the feast of the Epiphany, the emperor went to the great church and was much surprised and edified with the good order and respect with which the divine office was celebrated, and above all with the devotion and piety with which the archbishop performed the divine service at the altar. The emperor did not presume to present himself to the communion, knowing he would have been rejected; but went up trembling at the offertory and made the usual offering, which the bishop did not refuse, dispensing with the rigour of the ecclesiastical canons on such an occasion.

Nevertheless the next day Valens, to satisfy the importunities of his Arian bishops, ordered that Basil should depart into banishment. But at the time that the emperor gave this order against the saint, God in the high court of heaven passed a sentence against his only son, named Valentinian Gelatus, a child then about six years old. That very night was the royal infant seized with a violent fever, under which the physicians were not able to give him the least relief; and the Empress Dominica told the emperor that this calamity was a just punishment of heaven for his banishing Basil, on which account she had been disquieted by terrible dreams. Whereupon Valens sent for the saint, who was then just preparing to go into banishment. No sooner had the saint set foot within the palace but the young prince's fever began sensibly to abate, and Basil assured his parents of his absolute recovery, provided they would order him to be instructed in the Catholic faith. The emperor accepted the condition: St Basil prayed, and the young prince was cured. But Valens, **unfaithful to his promise, afterwards suffered an Arian bishop to baptize the child, who immediately relapsed and died.**<sup>1</sup> This stroke did not make

<sup>1</sup> Naz. Theodoret, Socrat. Sozom.

Valens enter into himself; but, growing more hardened by the contempt of grace, he gave a second order for banishing Basil. Going to sign it, he took for this purpose one of those reeds which the ancients used as we do pens, which many eastern people do at this day. This reed broke in his hands, as did a second and a third in like manner, as refusing to write: and as he was taking a fourth, he found his hand tremble and the sinews of his arm slackened, which made him in a fright tear the paper and leave Basil in quiet.<sup>1</sup> The Prefect Modestus was not so ungrateful to him as the emperor had been; for, recovering of a dangerous sickness by his charitable visit and prayers, he acknowledged the benefit done him and was ever after the saint's friend.

St Basil took two journeys into Armenia, to pacify certain disturbances and to redress scandals caused by the heretics in those parts. In 371 Cappadocia was divided by an imperial law into two provinces, and of the second Tyana was made the metropolis. Whereupon Anthimus, bishop of that city, claimed the jurisdiction of a metropolitan, grounding his pretensions on the civil division of the province; because it often happened that the bishop of the metropolis of a province was made an archbishop, though this was no general rule. In 373 the saint was visited with a dangerous fit of illness, in which he was once thought dead.<sup>2</sup> Yet he recovered, and took the benefit of the hot baths. In 376, Demosthenes, vicar of the *præfectus-prætorii*, being made governor of Cappadocia, favoured Eustathius of Sebaste and the other Arians, and raised a violent persecution against the Catholics, especially the friends of St Basil. But the Emperor Valens being defeated and burnt in a cottage in Thrace by the Goths, whom he himself had infected with the Arian heresy, on the 9th of August 378, peace was restored to the church by the Emperor Gratian. St Basil fell sick the same year and prepared himself for his passage to eternity. The whole city, in the utmost grief and consternation, resorted to his house, ready to use violence to his soul, if it were possible, that it might not quit its habitation. But the time was come in which God had decreed to recompense his faithful servant, and the saint with these words in his mouth, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," departed this life on the 1st of January 379, being fifty-one years old. His riches he had sent before him to heaven, and he did not leave enough for a tombstone; but the people not only erected an everlasting monument for him in their hearts, but also honoured him with funeral obsequies magnificent to the last degree. His sacred remains were carried by the hands of saints and accompanied by an incredible confluence of people. Everyone was for touching his shroud and the bed on which he had slept, thinking to receive some blessing from their devotion. Sighs and lamentations drowned the singing of the psalms; the very pagans and

<sup>1</sup> St Greg. Nyss.; St Ephrem; Theodoret.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 141.

Jews wept with the Christians, lamenting the death of the common father of all and the great doctor of the world. Those that knew him took a pleasure in recounting his minutest actions and every expression they had heard from his mouth; and such was their love for him that they affected to imitate him in his gestures, his beard, his gravity, and his slow delivery in speaking. They made it a fashion to copy after him in the form of his bed, his clothes, and spare table. Thus writes St Gregory Nazianzen, who in his panegyric of St Basil displays the virtues of his friend in such a manner as must make his discourse no less immortal on earth than the saint whom he praised.<sup>1</sup> St Gregory of Nyssa, St Amphilochius, and St Ephrem also wrote panegyrics in his honour. The two first of these testify that, immediately after the death of the saint, the Greeks kept his festival on the 1st of June, as they do at this day; the Latins have always transferred it to the 14th of June, the day on which he was ordained bishop. Theodoret gives him the title of the Great, which epithet has been always appropriated to him. He is styled by the same father the light of the universe; by St Sophronius, the honour and ornament of the church; by St Isidore of Pelusium, a man inspired by God; and by the General Council of Chalcedon, the great Basil, the minister of grace who has explained the truth to the whole earth. Photius Erasmus, in his excellent preface prefixed to the Greek edition of St Basil's works in 1532, and many other judicious critics call St Basil the most accomplished orator that ever lived, and his style the best model of genuine eloquence. Rollin and all others place him at least in the first class, as one of the greatest masters of eloquence. Photius writes<sup>2</sup> that, "Whoever desires to become a panegyrist or orator will neither need Plato nor Demosthenes if he takes Basil for his original. For there is no writer whose diction is more pure, more beautiful, and more expressive, or whose sense is stronger or more full. He joins all the powers of persuasion with sweetness and perspicuity, and his whole discourse runs like a still river, which flows smoothly and, as it were, of its own accord from its spring." Like Thucydides and Demosthenes, he is always pressing upon himself by the multitude of his thoughts, and the close union they bear one with another. The liveliness and justness of his ideas, and the fruitfulness of his imagination, vie with the perspicuity of his expressions: the harmoniousness of his numbers corresponds everywhere with the sense; and his style, by the beauty of its tropes and its easy transitions, rivals the sweetness and smoothness of Xenophon and Plato. Above all, the clearness of his understanding and the truth of his sentiments shine in whatever he writes, and his animated diction and commanding genius brighten whatever comes under his pen, carry light into the darkest recesses, and impress his own most lively images on his readers. St Gregory of Nazianzen says of his

<sup>1</sup> Or. 20.<sup>2</sup> Cod. 141.

writings,<sup>1</sup> "When I read his treatise Of the Creation, I seem to behold my Creator striking all things out of nothing; when I run over his writings against the heretics, methinks the fire of Sodom sparkles in my view, flashes upon the enemies of the faith, and consumes their criminal tongues to ashes. When I consider his treatise of the Holy Ghost, I find the God working within me, and I am no longer afraid of publishing aloud the truth; when I look into the Explications of the Holy Scripture, I dive into the most profound abyss of mysteries. His panegyrics of the martyrs make me to despise my body, and to seem animated with the same noble ardour of battle. His moral discourses assist me to purify both my body and soul, that I may become a worthy temple of God and an instrument of his praises, to make known his glory and his power.

St Basil was justly admired, not so much for his extraordinary learning and eloquence as for his profound humility and eminent zeal and piety. This is the only true greatness.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 14 :*

ST BASIL THE GREAT : ST DOCTMAEL, honoured in Brittany under the name of St TÔEL : ST METHODIUS, Patriarch of Constantinople, a learned Sicilian who forsook the world and built a monastery, before he was called to the see of Constantinople : ST NENNUS or NEHEMIAS of Ireland, of the family of the O'Birns : ST PSALMODIUS of Ireland, who renounced the world under the discipline of St Brendan : ST RUFINUS and ST VALERIUS, overseers of the imperial taxes near the river Vesle in Soissons; they were Christians of eminent piety, and were racked, torn with scourges, and finally beheaded on the high road to Soissons, in the third age.

## JUNE 15

### SAINTS VITUS, OR GUY, CRESCENTIA, AND MODESTUS, MARTYRS

IN THE BEGINNING OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

[See Collections of Papebroke, t. ii. Junii, p. 1013.]

THESE saints are mentioned with distinction in the ancient Martyrologies. According to their acts, they were natives of Sicily. Vitus, or Guy, was a child nobly born, who had the happiness to be instructed in the faith and inspired with the most perfect sentiments of his religion by his Christian nurse, named Crescentia, and her faithful husband Modestus. His father Hylas was extremely incensed when he discovered the child's invincible aversion to idolatry; and finding him not to be overcome by stripes and such-like chastisements, he delivered him up to Valerian, the governor, who in vain tried all his arts to work him into compliance with his father's will and the emperor's edicts. He escaped out of their hands and, together with Crescentia and Modestus, fled into Italy. They there met with the crown of martyrdom in Lucania, in the persecution of Diocletian. The heroic spirit of martyrdom which we admire in St Vitus was owing to

<sup>1</sup> Or. 20.

the early impressions of piety which he received from the lessons and example of a virtuous nurse; of such infinite importance is the choice of virtuous preceptors, nurses, and servants about children.

This reflection unfolds the reason why certain courts and ages were so fruitful in saints. The pagan Romans were solicitous that no slave should ever have access to their children who did not speak with perfect elegance and purity of language; and shall not a Christian be as careful as to manners and virtue? It is a fatal mistake to imagine that infants are ever too young to be infected with the contagion of vice. No age receives deeper impressions, or observes more narrowly everything that passes in others; nor is anything so easily or so insensibly imbibed as a spirit of vanity, pride, revenge, obstinacy, or sloth; or harder to be ever corrected. What a happiness for an infant to be formed from the mother's breast as it were naturally to all virtue, and for the spirit of simplicity, meekness, goodness, and piety to be moulded in its tender frame. Such a foundation being well laid, further graces are abundantly communicated, and a soul improves daily these seeds, and rises to the height of Christian virtue often without experiencing severe conflicts of the passions.<sup>1</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 15 :*

BLESSED BERNARD OF MENTHON, who built the Great St Bernard hospital and monastery; a noble Savoyard by birth; died 28th May, 1008, aged 85: ST GERMAINE COUSIN, virgin: BLESSED GREGORY LEWIS BARBADIGO, Cardinal-Bishop of Padua; many miracles of healing followed his happy death in 1697: ST LANDELIN, Abbot, educated under St Aubert, Bishop of Cambray: ST VAUGE of Ireland, hermit: and ST VITUS or GUY, ST CRESCENTIA, and ST MODESTUS, martyrs in the beginning of the fourth century.

## JUNE 16

### ST JOHN FRANCIS REGIS, CONFESSOR, OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

TRUE virtue or Christian perfection consists not in great or shining actions, but resides in the heart and appears to great edification, though in the usual train of common and religious duties constantly performed with fidelity and fervour. Such a life has its trials and often a severer martyrdom than that which stands the test of the flames. This we find in the life of the holy servant of God, John Francis Regis. He was born on the 31st of January, in 1597, at Foncouverte, a village in the diocese of Narbonne, in Languedoc. His parents, John Regis, who was descended from a younger branch of the noble house of Deplas, in Rovergue, and Magdalen Darcis, daughter to the lord of Segur, were distinguished amongst the nobility of Lower Languedoc by their virtue. Their eldest son was killed in the siege of Villemur, in a sally made by the Huguenot garrison. Francis was one of the youngest brothers. At five years of age he fainted

<sup>1</sup> For some unknown reason ST VITUS is invoked against Epilepsy, especially that disease known as St Vitas' Dance.

away hearing his mother speak of the horrible misfortune of being eternally damned; which discourse made a lasting impression on his tender heart. In his childhood he never discovered any inclination to the amusements of that age. The same disposition made him refuse at his school to join his companions in the innocent diversions of an age generally too eager for play. His first master was one of a morose, hasty temper, under whom this modest and bashful child had much to suffer; all which he bore without the least complaint. The Jesuits having opened a public school at Beziers, he was one of the first whom the reputation of its professors drew to the new college. His gravity increased with his years, nor was he to be seen in the beautiful walks which were chiefly crowded by his schoolfellows. Avaricious of his time, he scarcely allowed himself any for necessary relaxation. Sundays and holy-days were a most precious time to him, and he divided them entirely between pious reading and devotions at home and in the church. He was often seen on those days retired in a chapel and bathed in tears in the presence of Jesus Christ, the tender object of his affections. His conduct made him for some time the subject of his young companions' scorn and railleries; which his constancy changed at last into veneration. He performed many exercises in honour of the Blessed Virgin, with a particular confidence in her patronage, especially after he was enrolled in a confraternity under her name erected in the Jesuits' college. He had a singular devotion to his good angel, and improved every escape from any danger into a motive of redoubling his fervour and gratitude towards God. By the influence of his holy example, and by his religious discourses which were animated with a peculiar unction and divine fire, he inflamed many of his companions with the love of virtue and reclaimed several from dangerous courses. Six of the most fervent associated themselves with him in the same lodgings and formed a kind of regular seminary, looking upon him as their living rule, and honouring him as a saint and their master in a spiritual life.

In the eighteenth year of his age he was visited with a dangerous sickness, under which his patience and piety moved exceedingly all that came to see him. Soon after his recovery he made a spiritual retreat to deliberate on the choice of a state of life; and finding in his heart a strong impulse to devote himself to labour in procuring the salvation of souls in the Society of Jesus, and being confirmed by the advice of his confessor that this desire was a call of God, he earnestly begged to be admitted and was readily received by F. Francis Suarez, provincial of the Jesuits, then at Beziers, upon his visitation of that college. The postulant entered his noviceship with great joy at Toulouse, in the nineteenth year of his age, on the 8th of December 1616. Here being no longer divided between study and prayer, he gave himself to so close a union with God as to seem to be never without attention to his presence. His punctual exact-

ness and fervour in the minutest actions and duties raised them all to a great value; and by the excellence and purity of his motives, they became steps to an eminent interior perfection. Here he laid the deep foundation of those virtues which formed his distinguishing character during his whole life—humility, contempt of the world, holy hatred of himself, charity to the poor, and love of God and zeal for his glory. The meanest employs were his delight, such as the most humbling duties of a religious state—to wait at table and cleanse the house; also to make the beds and dress the sores of the poorest and most loathsome patients in the hospital, where he considered Jesus Christ in his most afflicted members. He was as austere to himself as he was tender to others, which made his companions say that he was his own eternal persecutor. He seemed never to do anything to indulge his senses, which he studied to curb and mortify. The spirit of prayer accompanied all his actions. The interior fire of his breast appeared in his looks. He was often seen at the foot of the altar without motion, as in a kind of rapture; and he spoke of God with such a feeling unction that he inspired all that heard him with his holy love and excited the most tepid to fervour.

After two years of probation he made his religious vows in 1618, and was then sent to Cahors to finish his rhetoric, and the following year to Tournon to perform his course of philosophy; but to preserve the fire of devotion in his heart under the dissipation of those studies, he joined to them frequent visits of the blessed sacrament, pious reading, and set times of holy recollection, though he made even his studies a continuation of his commerce with God in a continual recourse to him by devout aspirations. Such was his fidelity in every action that his superiors attested they never observed in him the least breach of any college duty, which procured him the name of the angel of the college. Desiring to form himself principally to the sacred function of teaching the poor the ways of salvation, he undertook, by his superior's consent, the charge of instructing the menial servants and the poor of the town of Tournon, to whom he distributed the alms of the college. On Sundays and holidays he preached in the adjacent villages, and summoned the children to catechism with a little bell. The little township of Andance having the happiness to fall under his particular care, it quite changed its face: the saint's zeal soon banished out of it drunkenness, licentiousness, and swearing; restored the frequent use of the sacraments, and established there first the confraternity of the blessed sacrament, the rules of which this holy man, then only two-and-twenty years old, but full of the spirit of devotion, drew up, and which was afterwards propagated to other places. He regulated families, composed differences, and reformed all manner of irregularities: such was the authority which his sanctity and holy prudence procured him.



Having finished his course of philosophy in 1621, he was sent to teach the schools of humanity at Billom, Auch, and Puy; in which employ he spared no application for the assistance of his scholars, both in their studies and in exciting them to virtue, loving them as a tender mother does her children, and being beloved and revered by them as a saint. He was particularly diligent in procuring them all relief in sickness, and by his prayers obtained the sudden recovery of one whose life was despaired of; but he was most sensible to their spiritual infirmities. Being informed of a grievous sin committed by one of them, he burst into a torrent of tears, and after a short recollection he made, in the transport that had seized him, so pathetic a discourse to his scholars on the severity of God's judgments that the terrors with which it struck their minds never forsook them their whole lives after, as several of them used to say. The edifying example, simplicity, humility, modesty, and penitential air of the master was a most moving and continual sermon to them; and such was the powerful influence it had that they were visibly distinguished from others by the regularity of their lives. To solicit the blessings of heaven for them, he always spent some time at the foot of the altar before he entered the school and implored the assistance of their angel guardians in their behalf. His union with God was perpetual; and from hence flowed his other virtues, particularly his saintly exterior comportment. To animate himself in spirit, notwithstanding the fatigues of his employment, he added many other devotions to the daily hour's meditation and other prayers enjoined by the rules of the Society. He often begged leave of the superior to make extraordinary communions besides those that were regular in the house; and having obtained it, broke out in transports of joy, which testified his insatiable desire of, and the great comfort he received from, that divine food. He prepared himself to receive it by private austerities and public humiliations, and by spending a great part of the night before in the church. On Sundays and holidays he continued to instruct the poor people with wonderful unction and fruit, and, even in his familiar conversation, turned all to some spiritual advantage. After he had taught the lower classes seven years, two at Billom, one at Auch, and four at Puy, he began the study of divinity at Toulouse in 1628, in which, by his assiduity and the pregnancy of his wit, he made an uncommon progress; yet, out of a fear of applause, he sought to make himself contemptible by an unaffected simplicity and pretended ignorance. In the vacation, at the time which the students spent in their country house for the necessary relaxation of their mind, Regis withdrew into private places to converse with God almost the whole day; and in the night, after a short sleep he arose and stole secretly into the domestic chapel; which a companion having discovered and informed the superior thereof, he received this answer, "Interrupt not the sweet communications of that angel with God."

Notice being given him by his superiors, in the beginning of the year 1630, to prepare himself for holy orders, he felt in his breast the struggle of the strongest sentiments of a humble terror and a glowing zeal; but as he saw the will of God intimated in the order of his superiors, his fears were calmed and he disposed himself for that sacrament by retirement, austerities, prayer, and fervorous desires. He then longed for the happiness of approaching the altars, so that he promised his superior to say thirty masses for him because he had hastened the time of his ordination. When ordained, he took time to prepare, by prayer and penance, to offer the divine sacrifice, and celebrated his first mass with the most tender devotion and in one continued torrent of tears; so that those who were present could not contain theirs; and by the divine fire which sparkled in his countenance, thought him liker an angel than a man at the altar. The same year, Toulouse being afflicted with a violent plague, Francis made pressing instances to obtain leave to serve the sick. In 1631, after the course of his studies was over, he made the third year of his novitiate, during which he was obliged to go to Foncouverte to settle some family affairs, where he spent his time in visiting the poor and sick, catechising the children every morning, and preaching to the people twice a day. His begging for the poor, going through the streets followed by crowds of them and children, and carrying upon his shoulders a fagot, a straw bed, or such-like things for the necessitous, drew on him many insults, once from the very soldiers, and bitter remonstrances from his brothers and other friends; but he rejoiced in the humiliations of the cross, and answered that they became a minister of the gospel which had been established by them. Their contempt of him was at last converted into admiration, and everyone discerned in his actions a divine wisdom and zeal which differs from worldly prudence, and rejoices with David if its simplicity appears contemptible to men. He lived amongst his kindred as one truly dead to the world—not like those religious persons who, wanting the spirit of their vocation, seek earthly comforts among them. Having composed the differences of his relations and edified them by his humility and heavenly life, he was ordered to go to the college of Pamiers to supply the place of a master who was fallen sick. In the meantime his superiors, from the experience they had of his vocation and talents for an apostolic life, resolved to apply him solely to the missions; in which he accordingly spent the last ten years of his life, beginning them in Languedoc, continuing them through the Vivarez, and ending them with his life in the Velay, of which Le Puy is the capital. The summer he employed in cities and towns, as the husbandmen then were taken up with their tillage; but the winter seasons he consecrated to the villages and the country.

F. Regis entered upon his apostolical course at Montpellier in 1631, arriving there in the beginning of summer, and immediately opening his

mission by instructing the children, and preaching to the people upon Sundays and holidays in the church of the college. His discourses were plain and familiar: after a clear exposition of the Christian truth which he had taken for his subject, he closed them with moral and pathetic exhortations; he delivered them with such vehemency that sometimes his voice and strength failed him; and with such unction that both preacher and audience often were dissolved in tears, and the most hardened left the church with hearts full of compunction. He was always resorted to by a numberless audience of all ranks, though principally of the poor. A famous preacher was astonished to see how his catechisms were admired, and the great conversions they effected, whilst elegant sermons had so few to hear them and produced so little fruit. The reason was, the word of God became a two-edged sword in the mouth of Regis, who spoke it from a heart full of the spirit of God, whereas it was lost under the pomp of an affected rhetoric. The saint never refused himself to the rich, but he used to say they would never want confessors and that the poor destitute part of Christ's flock were his share and his delight. He thought that he ought to live only for them. He spent usually the whole morning in the confessional, at the altar, or in the pulpit; the afternoon he devoted to the hospitals and prisons, sometimes forgetting his meals, having, as he once said, no leisure to think on them. He begged from door to door for the poor; procured them physicians and all necessities when sick, and dressed himself their most loathsome sores. He was seen loaded with bundles of straw for them; and when laughed at by the children and told that this made him ridiculous, he answered, "With all my heart; we receive a double advantage when we purchase a brother's relief with our own disgrace." He established an association of thirty gentlewomen to procure assistance for the prisoners. He converted several Huguenots and many lewd women; and when told the repentance of these latter is seldom sincere, he answered, "If my labours hinder one sin, they will be well bestowed."

Towards winter he went to Sommiers, the capital of Lavonage, twelve miles from Montpellier, and with incredible labour declaring war against vice and extreme ignorance, saw his endeavours crowned with the most surprising success over all that country, penetrating into the most inaccessible places, and deterred by no rigours of weather, living chiefly on bread and water, taking sometimes a little milk, always abstaining from fish, flesh, eggs, and wine; allowing himself very little rest at night on some hard bench or floor, and wearing a hair shirt. With a crucifix in his hand he boldly stopped a troop of enraged soldiers from plundering a church; and another time demanded and obtained of a Calvinist officer the restitution of a poor man's goods which had been plundered, without mentioning the high indignities and ill-treatment he had received from

the soldiers, to the commander's great astonishment. The Vivarez had been for fifty years the centre of Calvinism in France, and the seat of horrible wars and desolation. The pious Bishop of Viviers, in 1633, by earnest entreaties drew Regis into his diocese, received him with great veneration, and took him with him in his visitation, during which the father made a most successful mission over that whole diocese. The Count de la Mothe Brion, who had lived as a wise man of the world, was so moved with the unction of the holy man's sermons as entirely to devote himself to fasting, prayer, and alms. This nobleman, by his zeal and charities, very much contributed to assist the saint in his holy enterprises; in which he was seconded by another gentleman named de la Suchere, who had formerly been the saint's scholar. At Puy, Regis undertook the reformation of many negligent pastors, brought many lewd women, and some the most obstinate and abandoned, to become patterns of fervour among the penitents, and converted a Calvinist lady of great reputation at Usez. About that time God permitted a storm to be raised against his servant for his trial; for amidst these glorious successes he was accused loudly as a disturber of the peace of families by his indiscreet zeal, and as a violent man who spared no one in his invectives and satires. The bishop defended him; till, wearied out with repeated complaints, he wrote to his superior to recall him, and sending for the saint, gave him a severe reprimand, adding that he found himself under a necessity of dismissing him. Regis, who had all along neglected to take any measures for his own justification, answered him with such humility and with such an unfeigned love of humiliations and the cross that the prelate was charmed with his virtue; and being undeceived by others in regard to him, he praised him in public, and continued him with his employ till the beginning of the year 1634, when the missionary was ordered by his superiors to repair to Puy, but went loaded with letters full of the highest commendations of his virtue and prudence from the good bishop.

The saint wrote earnestly to the general of the society, desiring to be employed on a mission to the barbarous Hurons and Iroquois in Canada, and received a favourable answer; but at the request of Count de la Mothe, he returned early the next year to the diocese of Viviers, to labour in the conversion of Calvinists and in the instruction of the ignorant at Cheylard and on the other estates of that gentleman. It is incredible how much the apostolic man underwent in this rough country, in the highest mountains, in which he was once locked up three weeks by the snows, lying on the bare ground, eating only black bread and drinking water, with the addition of astonishing voluntary mortifications, fasts, disciplines to blood, and hair shirts. The count was so edified and so moved with the inexpressible fruits of his labours that he founded a perpetual mission for two Jesuits at Cheylard, giving to it a principal of sixteen thousand livres, and his fine house

there for their residence. Regis made his next mission at Privas with equal fruit, and thence was called by the Bishop of Valence to St Aggreve, a mountainous savage place, the nest of heresy in his diocese. Amongst his heroic actions and virtues here, it is recorded that one Sunday, going into an inn to stop the excesses committed by lewd company assembled in it, he received from one a box on the ear, without any other reply than this, "I thank you; if you knew me, you would judge that I deserve much more": which meekness overcame their obstinacy. After three months' labours in this neighbourhood, by the same bishop's orders, he repaired to St André des Fangas, and was from thence recalled to Marlihes in the Vivarez about the end of the year 1635. In the first of these two places, a boy falling from the top of a high pair of stairs to the bottom near the holy man, then at his prayer in a corner, was found without hurt; in the latter, a woman who would take his tattered cloak to mend, keeping two rags as relics, by applying them to two of her children, cured one of a fever, the other of a formed dropsy. Winter being over, he returned to Puy about the end of April in 1636, testifying that he found his strength and courage not abated but increased by his labours. He met at the college here his general's refusal of the mission of Canada, which frustrated his hopes of martyrdom. This refusal he imputed to his sins.

The four remaining years of his life were taken up in missions in the Velay, a mountainous country; the winters in the villages, the summers in Puy, the bishop of which city made use of his counsels and ministry to reform his flock. He preached and catechised at Puy, first in the Jesuit's church; but this being too little, he removed to that of St Peter le Monstiers, belonging to the Benedictins. His discourses were without art, but clear to the meanest capacities, and delivered with that emotion of heart, and so moving a tone of voice, that he seemed transported by a divine fire above himself; and all who heard him declared that "Francis preached the word of God as it is in itself; whereas others seemed, in comparison of him, to preach themselves." His audience usually consisted of four or five thousand. His provincial in his visitation, hearing him, wept during the whole sermon. He formed an association of virtuous ladies to relieve the poor, and another in favour of the prisoners; for both which incredible funds were raised, and in times of need God miraculously multiplied the corn he had stored up three several times: of which verbal processes were drawn up and juridical informations taken before ecclesiastical and secular judges; and these miracles were confirmed by fourteen credible witnesses in the acts of his canonization.

His constant readiness and extreme diligence to run to the sick, and his happy success in assisting them in spirituals, were recompensed by several cures effected on the spot by his prayers, the unexceptionable relation of which may be read at length in F. Daubenton's History of his

life.<sup>1</sup> Nor were the conversions of many sinners less miraculous. Amongst these, a certain voluptuous rich merchant had long endeavoured to blacken the saint's reputation by his slanders, who in return bought of him all he wanted for his poor. Having softened him to a more tractable temper by these and other good offices, he laid hold of a favourable opportunity of representing to him what could be the end of his pains, and the fruit of all his riches, which death must soon bereave him of; the man was struck, and having revolved in his mind all night the reflections the words of the man of God raised in him, came the next day to lay open the agitation of his soul to him. The saint having for some time continued to excite in him still livelier apprehensions of the divine judgments, and conducted him through sentiments of hope and divine love to the dispositions of a perfect penitent, he heard his general confession, which the other made with such a flood of tears that the confessor judged the greatness of his contrition might require a smaller penance. The penitent asked him why he had so much spared his weakness. The zealous pastor answered that he took upon himself to discharge the rest of his debt; which mildness added still more to the fervour of this repenting sinner. His meekness and patience made a conquest of those souls which were so hardened as to be able to resist his zeal. A young man, enraged that the saint had converted and drawn from him the object of his impure passion, resolved to kill him. The man of God discovered, by a divine light, his wicked intention, and said to him, "Dear brother, why do you bear this ill-will to one that would hazard his life to procure you the greatest of blessings—eternal salvation?" The sinner, overcome by his sweetness, fell at his feet, begged his pardon, and became a sincere convert. Three other young noblemen, on a like occasion, resolved revenge. Regis met them with courage, saying to them, "You come with a design upon my life. What concerns me is not death, which is the object of my wishes; but the state of damnation that you are in, and regard so little." The libertines stood as if stunned; Regis, embracing them with the tenderness of a parent, induced them to repent; and they made their confessions to him, and led regular lives till their deaths. Addressing drunkards and other sinners, with his eyes all on fire with zeal, he often by one moving sentence reclaimed them from their disorders. When he had received a blow on the cheek, the magistrates could not prevail upon him to denounce the delinquent; but the offender, moved by his charity, became of his own accord his sincere penitent.

The servant of God was extremely solicitous in removing all occasions of sin, and preventing the promiscuous company of young men and women. He converted many prostitutes with the help of charitable contributions, founded a retreat to secure the virtue of such penitents, till his rector,

<sup>1</sup> B. iii.

fearing that house could not be maintained, forbade him to intermeddle in it; he, moreover, gave him many severe reprimands even in public, accused his zeal as too forward, and forbade him to hear confessions, instruct the poor, or visit the sick, only on certain days and at appointed times. Regis suffered many humiliations and mortifications under this superior, without even allowing anyone to speak in his justification; till the succeeding rector, convinced of his innocence and prudence, restored to him the care of the refuge and the whole field of his former labours. His zeal exposed him often to occasions of martyrdom and to open insults, and once he was cruelly beaten. He was also censured bitterly by many, and even by several of his own brethren; but his rector undertook his defence, and God crowned his labours with incredible success; in which he was seconded by the great vicar, Peter le Blanc, his constant friend, without whose counsel he undertook nothing. This is the summary of his transactions at Puy during the four last summers of his missions; the winters he employed in labouring in the country, the most abandoned part of which was his first care and chief delight.

The country inhabitants in the Velay in some parts, especially in the mountains, were very rustic and perfectly savage; Calvinism had insinuated itself, and ignorance and the grossest vices prevailed in many of the wilder places. The boroughs and villages are situated in the diocese of Puy, Vienne, Valence, and Viviers. The saint's first mission amongst them was in the beginning of the year 1636, to Fay and the neighbouring places. Hugh Sourdon, LL.D., engaged him to lodge in his house. The man of God, finding his kind host's son, Claudius Sourdon, aged fourteen years, entirely deprived of all sight for the six months past, from a defluxion upon his eyes, with excessive pain, he exhorted him to confidence in God, and retired into a neighbouring room to prayer with some of the family, which he had not ended when the child recovered his sight, and distinguished everybody in the assembly, which then met to hear the first catechistical instruction; and from that time never felt any more, either of that pain or defluxion, as he attested before the bishops of Puy and Valence, being then fourscore years old. Upon this, another man, forty years of age, who had been blind eight years, was brought to the saint, who making the sign of the cross over him, immediately restored his sight. By the fame of these two miracles, this mission was opened with wonderful concourse and fruit. His conduct in it is thus described by Claudius Sourdon, with whom he lodged, in a juridical deposition that grave person gave before two bishops: "His whole behaviour breathed sanctity. Men could neither see nor hear him without being inflamed with the love of God. He celebrated the divine mysteries with such devotion that he seemed like an angel at the altar. I have observed him in familiar conversation become silent and recollected, and all on fire;

then speaking of God with a fervour and rapidity that proved his heart to be carried away with an impulse from heaven. He pronounced his popular instructions with an unction which penetrated his hearers. He spent not only the day, but also a considerable part of the night in hearing confessions, and violence was necessary to oblige him to take some nourishment. He never complained of fatigue, or of the disagreeable behaviour of any that thronged to him. After he had laboured to sanctify the inhabitants of Fay, he set out early every morning into the country amidst the forests and mountains. When storms, rains, snows, or floods made the roads seem impassable to others, nothing ever stopped or daunted him. He went the whole day from cottage to cottage, and fasting, unless my mother could prevail with him to take an apple in his pocket. We never saw him again till night, and then he resumed his ordinary functions, unwearied only by fresh labours. The Calvinists were as forward as the Catholics in following him everywhere. In the beginning of summer, in 1637, he returned to his labours at Puy; and in November set out to pass his winter at Marlhes, being called on a second mission thither by the pressing instances of James André, the zealous curate. His road was horrible, sometimes through briers and thorns, sometimes over valleys filled with snow and rocks covered with ice. In climbing one of the highest, his hold by a bush failed him and he broke his leg by a fall; yet he cheerfully got over six miles further with the help of a stick and the support of his companion. Arriving at Marlhes, instead of sending for a surgeon, he went directly to the church, where multitudes were waiting for him, and heard confessions for several hours; till the curate, informed of his accident by his companion, drew him out to have his leg visited, when it was found perfectly sound. To his immense labours he added such astonishing austerities that, upon remonstrances, his rector at Puy sent him a command to obey the curate of Marlhes in all that belonged to his refreshment and the care of his health. The saint from that time submitted most exactly to the good priest's rules in that regard, how troublesome soever he found his indulgence. This curate declared in his deposition that, narrowly observing the man of God at all times, he saw him in the night one while on his knees, bowed to the ground, bathed in tears; then standing with his eyes lifted up to heaven and absorbed in contemplation. He often heard him fetch deep sighs and cry out in transports of love, "What in the world can engage my heart besides thee, my God?"

He frequently beheld him in prayer all on fire, like a seraphim, motionless for many hours. The same gentleman adds that he saw the holy man by his blessing restore a countryman's arm, put out of joint by a fall near his house as he was crowding to the saint on a steep descent; and that by the sign of the cross he dispossessed an Energumen, who



redoubled his contortions and howlings when brought to his presence, but was immediately calmed by the impression of that sign, and continued ever after unmolested. He had been possessed by the evil spirit eight years, and been often exorcised without success. In the village of St Bonnet le Froid, the curate found the saint in the night praying at the church door, on his knees and bare-headed; and not being able to draw him from his divine conferences, he gave him the key of the church, in which he observed that he afterwards passed whole nights, notwithstanding the intolerable cold. To the remonstrance of the curate of Vourcy concerning the care of his health, the saint said in confidence that since God had visibly testified his goodness by healing his leg broken in his journey to Marlies, he owed his health to him by a fresh title, and put it in his hands. In the year 1638, from Puy his winter mission was to Montregard; where upon his arrival he prayed at the church door till he was quite covered with snow, and was found by passengers in that condition. He nowhere reaped a greater harvest of souls than in this place; and converted, besides many other Calvinists, the Lady Louisa de Romezino, a young widow of great reputation as well as quality. The summer in 1639 recalled the missionary to Puy, and the end of the next autumn he went out to his country harvest in the places near Montregard—as Issenjaux, Chambon, Monistrol. About the end of January, in 1640, he repaired to Montfaucon, a little town twenty-one miles from Puy. His successes were wonderful in the ample field which his zeal found here, till interrupted by the plague which broke out in that place. Regis devoted himself to the service of the infected, and was so fearless as to carry the abandoned sick on his back to the hospital, and to perform the most laborious offices to assist all, corporeally and spiritually. His charity excited that of the ecclesiastics of the place. The curate, however, fearing his death in the imminent dangers to which he exposed himself, obliged him to leave the town, which the saint did with great reluctance and many tears. The contagion soon after ceasing, he returned to resume his mission there, but was recalled to Puy by the rector to supply the place of a master there. This interruption was so great a grief to him that he begged and obtained from the general of the Society leave to follow his missions, for which the Bishop of Puy had conferred on him his full power. He, moreover, formed a design for the establishment of a perpetual mission for those provinces, to be settled in the College of Puy or Tournon, which project was highly approved by his superiors and by the general.

His true love of God appeared in the constant union of his soul with the Divine Spirit; often a pious word or song would throw him into a rapture. His most familiar aspiration was that of the royal prophet, "What can I desire in heaven, or love on earth, besides thee, my God?" which he repeated with seraphic ardours. He vehemently desired to

procure God's greatest honour in all things, saying "We are created by God, and for him alone; and must direct all things to his glory." His love of the cross, and his thirst of sufferings and humiliations, was insatiable, and he was accustomed to say that to suffer for God deserved not the name of suffering, so light is it made by love and the sweet unction of grace. When persecuted and beaten, he was heard to cry out, "O my God! that I could suffer still more for thy holy name!" He found true pleasure in hunger, cold, and all manner of hardships, saying once to his companions, "I own that life would be intolerable if I had nothing to suffer for Jesus Christ; it is my only comfort in this world." He never excused or justified himself if reprehended, and never answered any calumny, even though carried to his superiors. He seemed equally insensible to praises and insults, receiving cheerfully all ill-treatment in silence as his due. Martyrdom was his perpetual desire, though he sincerely esteemed himself unworthy of such an honour. He called injuries and scorn his due, and was ingenious to court humiliations and disgraces, being accustomed to say that if justice were done him he ought to be trodden under foot by all men. When one presented a drawn sword, threatening to kill him, he said, "I desire nothing more ardently than to die for Jesus Christ." He spared nothing to prevent sin, and once said with tears to an obstinate sinner, "Ah, I beg of you rather to despatch me with your sword than to offend the Divine Majesty." His confidence in the safeguard of providence made him fear no harm from men, and rendered him intrepid in the midst of dangers the sight of which often shook his companion with horror. He would walk all night, and often on the edge of precipices, or over mountains covered with snow, and cross impetuous torrents, only not to disappoint some poor people a few hours. His devotion to the blessed eucharist made him spend much of his time in prayer before the blessed sacrament, saying mass whatever it cost him to find an opportunity. He called the holy eucharist his refuge, his comfort, and his delight. Under all censures and crosses he preserved the same evenness of mind, so effectually had the love of God destroyed in his heart all human earthly affections. He allowed himself only three hours a night for sleep; and often not above one. He never touched flesh, fish, eggs, or wine; and the bare ground or boards were his bed. His chamber was the most inconvenient room he could choose, and his habit all over patches; nor would he wear a new cassock. His obedience was so perfect that with regard to it he looked upon himself as a dead body, without any motion or feeling of his own, nor had he any other rule of his will than that of his superiors. He had the greatest respect for and an entire dependence on the bishops in whose dioceses he was employed, and their vicars-general. His purity was so perfect that his very presence inspired a love of that virtue; nor durst calumny

itself charge him with the least reproach on that head. It is assured upon the testimonies of those who had the most perfect knowledge of his interior that he seemed exempt from all sting of the flesh, so perfectly had he subdued his domestic enemy by assiduous mortification, a watchful humility, and dread of all occasions of temptations. The same vouchers assure us they were persuaded that he never had offended God by any mortal sin in his whole life.

He resumed the mission of Montfaucon in the beginning of autumn in the year 1640. The ardour he found in the people to profit by his labours redoubled his fervour in serving them. After he had sanctified the whole district of Montfaucon, Rocoulles, and Veirines, he gave notice for opening a mission at La Louvese about the end of Advent. But understanding by a divine light that his death was near at hand, he went back to Puy to make a retreat in order to prepare himself for it. After three days spent in the strictest solitude, he made a general confession, and expressed in the warmest and tenderest sentiments an impatient desire to possess God. Eternity was the sole object of his wishes. He confidently told some of his friends in open terms, and others by mysterious expressions which became clear by the event, that he should never return from that mission. The inclemency of the weather could not detain him: he left Puy on the 22nd of December, to reach La Louvese the day following, to be ready there for Christmas-eve; he suffered much in crossing the mountains and the waters, and missed his way on the second day. Overtaken by night in the woods, and quite spent, he was forced to lie in a ruinous house, open on all sides, near the village of Veirines, on the ground, exposed to a piercing wind. Here, after a sudden sweat succeeded by a cold fit, he was seized with a pleurisy, which increasing, his pain grew excessive. This decayed house represented to him the hardships our new-born Saviour suffered in the stable of Bethlehem, on which he made the most tender reflections. Next morning he crawled to La Louvese, went straight to the church, and opened the mission by a discourse in which his zeal recruited his strength and courage. He preached thrice on Christmas-day, and thrice on St-Stephen's, spending the rest of these three days in the confessional. After the third sermon on St Stephen's day, when he went to hear confessions, he swooned away twice. The physicians found his case past recovery. The holy man repeated the general confession he had made eight days before, then desired the holy viaticum and extreme unction, which he received like a person all on fire with the love of God. He refused broth, begging to be nourished like the poor with a little milk, and desired to be left alone. Under his violent pains his countenance was always serene, and he kissed incessantly a crucifix which he held in his hand. Nothing was heard from him but tender and warm aspirations, and longing desires of his

heavenly country. He asked to be laid in a stable, that he might resemble his new-born Saviour laid on straw; but was answered that his weakness would not suffer it. He thanked God for the favour of suffering him to die in the midst of the poor. All the 31st day of December he continued in a perfect tranquillity, with his eyes tenderly fixed on Jesus crucified, who alone took up his thoughts. At evening, in a transport, he said to his companion, "What a happiness! how contented I die! I see Jesus and Mary, who come to conduct me to the mansions of bliss." A moment after he joined his hands; then, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said: "Jesus, my Saviour, to thee I recommend, and into thy hands I commit, my soul." With which words he calmly expired towards midnight, on the last day of the year 1640, being forty-three years of age, whereof he had lived twenty-six in the Society. Twenty-two curates, with incredible crowds of people, assisted at his funeral. He was interred on the 2nd of January, near the altar of La Louvese.

The universal grief for his loss was succeeded by the highest veneration; and innumerable flocks of pilgrims visited his tomb: and a poor private religious man, who only breathed abjection, who placed all his satisfaction in being despised, and lay dead on the top of a frightful mountain, was on a sudden crowned with glory, and his ashes on earth honoured by continual miracles. La Louvese, then only a chapel of ease under the curate of Veirines, is become the parish church and much enriched. Twenty-two archbishops and bishops of Languedoc wrote to Pope Clement XI in these words: "We are witnesses that before the tomb of F. John Francis Regis, the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dumb speak; and the fame of these surprising wonders is spread over all nations." Fourteen eye-witnesses attested upon oath the miraculous and sudden recovery of Magdalen Arnould, a nun at Puy, sick of a dropsy and palsy, and in her agony, the physicians declaring that she could not live half an hour, a relic of the servant of God was put into her hands, and applying it to her stomach, she offered a fervent prayer to him, and that moment she found herself perfectly cured and her monstrous swelling dispersed. This happened in 1656. A burgher of Puy was healed of a great rupture formed in three places; his cure was sudden and entire, as physicians, surgeons, and many other witnesses attest. No less sudden were the cures of two blind women; of a young man of the king's evil; of many paralytic, crooked children; and others under all sorts of distempers, several of them being persons of rank and of different provinces; and the facts being all attested by many witnesses and by the persons themselves. The holy see requires incontestable proofs of miracles to which it gives a sanction; and so strict is this inquiry that F. Daubenton informs us that an English Protestant gentleman, being at Rome, and seeing the process of several miracles, said they were incontestable if the church of

Rome approved of none but such; but was much surprised at the scrupulosity of this scrutiny, when told that not one of all those had been allowed by the Congregation of Rites to have been sufficiently proved. After the most severe juridical examination of the heroic virtues and evident miracles of St John Francis Regis, he was beatified by Clement XI in 1716, and canonized by Clement XII in 1737,<sup>1</sup> at the request of the kings Lewis XV of France and Philip V of Spain, and of the French clergy assembled at Paris in 1735. His festival was appointed to be kept on the 16th of this month.

How happy is the life of that faithful servant of God whose years, days, and moments, whether in public or private, are all filled with good works, so many fruitful seeds of a glorious eternity! whose desires, thoughts, and actions are all directed to the honour of God, and his own advancement in goodness! Viewed with such a life in whatever station, how mean and contemptible do the idle amusements of the great ones of the world appear! How trifling that uninterrupted succession of serious folly or empty pleasures which engages the greatest part of mankind! After all their turmoils they find their hands empty, and feel their hearts filled only with fears, remorse, and bitterness, instead of holy peace and joy, with the riches of eternity in store.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 16 :*

ST AURELIAN, Archbishop of Arles, founded a great monastery in that city, 546: ST FERREOLUS, a priest, and ST FERRUTIUS, a deacon, martyrs, ordained by St Iraneus; the relics of these martyrs were glorified by St Gregory of Tours, who testified that his brother-in-law was cured by them: ST JOHN FRANCIS REGIS, S.J.: and ST QUIRICUS and ST JULITTA, the latter a Roman lady who was killed with her little son, aged three years, Quiricus or Cyr.

## JUNE 17

### ST NICANDER AND ST MARCIAN, MARTYRS

(ABOUT THE YEAR 303)

[From their genuine acts, in Mabillon, Mus. Ital. t. i.; and Ruinart, p. 551.]

THESE saints, as appears from the circumstances of their acts, suffered under Diocletian, and probably in Mœsia, a province of Illyricum, under the same governor who condemned St Julius; though some moderns place their martyrdom at Venafro, at present in the kingdom of Naples. They had served some time in the Roman troops, but when the edicts were everywhere published against the Christians, foregoing all expectations from the world, they forsook the army. This was made a crime in them and they were impeached before Maximus, the governor of the province. The judge informed them of the imperial order that all were commanded to sacrifice to the gods. Nicander replied that order could

<sup>1</sup> Bullar. Roman. t. xv. p. 127.

not regard Christians, who looked upon it as unlawful to abandon the immortal God to adore wood and stones. Daria, the wife of Nicander, was present, and encouraged her husband. Maximus, interrupting her, said, "Wicked woman, why would you have your husband die?" "I wish not for his death," said she, "but that he live in God, so as never to die." Maximus reproached her that she desired his death because she wanted another husband. "If you suspect that," said she, "put me to death first." The judge said his orders did not extend to women; for this happened upon the first edict, which regarded only the army. However, he commanded her to be taken into custody; but she was released soon after, and returned to see the issue of the trial. Maximus, turning again to Nicander, said, "Take a little time, and deliberate with yourself whether you choose to die or to live." Nicander answered, "I have already deliberated upon the matter, and have taken the resolution to save myself." The judge took it that he meant he would save his life by sacrificing to the idols; and, giving thanks to his gods, began to congratulate and rejoice with Suetonius, one of his assessors, for their imaginary victory. But Nicander soon undeceived him by crying out, "God be thanked," and by praying aloud that God would deliver him from the dangers and temptations of the world. "How now!" said the governor, "you but just now desired to live, and at present you ask to die." Nicander replied, "I desire that life which is immortal, not the fleeting life of this world. To you I willingly yield up my body; do with it what you please. I am a Christian." "And what are your sentiments, Marcian?" said the judge, addressing himself to the other. He declared that they were the same with those of his fellow-prisoner. Maximus then gave orders that they should be both confined in the dungeon, where they lay twenty days; after which they were again brought before the governor, who asked them if they would at length obey the edicts of the emperors. Marcian answered, "All you can say will never make us abandon our religion or deny God. We behold him present by faith, and know whither he calls us. Do not, we beseech you, detain or retard us; but send us quickly to him, that we may behold him that was crucified, whom you stick not to blaspheme, but whom we honour and worship." The governor granted their request, and excusing himself by the necessity he lay under of complying with his orders, condemned them both to lose their heads. The martyrs expressed their gratitude and said, "May peace be with you, O most clement judge." They walked to the place of execution joyful, and praising God as they went. Nicander was followed by his wife Daria, with his child whom Papinian, brother to the martyr St Pasocrates, carried in his arms. Marcian's wife, differing much from the former and his other relations, followed him, weeping and howling in excess of grief. She, in particular, did all that in her lay to overcome his resolution, and

for that purpose often showed him his little child, the fruit of their marriage; and continually pulled and held him back till he, having rebuked her, desired Zoticus, a zealous Christian, to keep her behind. At the place of execution he called for her, and embracing his son and looking up to heaven said, "Lord, all-powerful God, take this child into thy special protection." Then, with a check to his wife for her base cowardice, he bade her go away in peace, because she could not have the courage to see him die. The wife of Nicander continued by his side, exhorting him to constancy and joy. "Be of good heart, my lord," said she; "ten years have I lived at home from you, never ceasing to pray that I might see you again. Now am I favoured with that comfort, and I behold you going to glory, and myself the wife of a martyr. Give to God that testimony you owe to his holy truth, that you may also deliver me from eternal death": meaning that, by his sufferings and prayers, he might obtain mercy for her. The executioner, having bound their eyes with their handkerchiefs, struck off their heads on the 17th of June.

Faith and grace made these martyrs triumph over all considerations of flesh and blood. They did not abandon their orphan babes, to whom they left the example of their heroic virtue, and whom they committed to the special protection of their heavenly Father. We never lose what we leave to obey the voice of God. When we have taken all prudent precautions, and all the care in our power, we ought to commend all things with confidence to the divine mercy. This ought to banish all anxiety out of our breasts. God's blessing and protection is all we can hope or desire: we are assured he will never fail on his side; and what can we do more than to conjure him never to suffer us by our malice to put any obstacle to his mercy? On it is all our reliance for the salvation of our souls. How much more ought we to trust to his goodness in all other concerns.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 17 :*

ST AVITUS or AVY, Abbot, whose happy death occurred about the year 530 : ST BOTOLPH and ST ADULPH, two noble English brothers who travelled into the Belgic Gaul, where St Adulph became Bishop of Maestricht and St Botolph an Abbot greatly beloved as being "humble, mild and affable": ST MOLINGUS, alias DAIRCHILLA, one of "the four prophets of Ireland": ST NICANDER and ST MARCIAN, martyrs: and ST PRIOR, hermit, a native of Egypt and one of the first disciples of St Anthony.

## JUNE 18

### ST MARCUS AND ST MARCELLIANUS, MARTYRS (A.D. 286)

[From the acts of St Sebastian. See Tillemont, t. iv.; Baronius ad an. 286, n. 23.]

MARCUS and MARCELLIANUS were twin brothers of an illustrious family in Rome, had been converted to the faith in their youth, and were honourably married. Diocletian ascending the imperial throne in 284, soon

after which the heathens raised tumultuary persecutions, though this emperor had not yet published any new edicts against the church, these martyrs were thrown into prison and condemned by Chromatius, lieutenant of the Prefect of Rome, to be beheaded. Their friends obtained a respite of the execution for thirty days, that they might prevail with them to comply with the judge, and they were removed into the house of Nicostratus, the public register. Tranquillinus and Martia, their afflicted heathen parents, in company with their sons' own wives and their little babes at their breasts, endeavoured to move them by the most tender entreaties and tears. St Sebastian, an officer of the emperor's household, coming to Rome soon after their commitment, daily visited and encouraged them. The issue of the conferences was the happy conversion of the father, mother, and wives, also of Nicostratus and, soon after, of Chromatius, who set the saints at liberty and, abdicating the magistracy, retired into the country. Marcus and Marcellinus were hid by Castulus, a Christian officer of the household, in his apartments in the palace; but they were betrayed by an apostate, named Torquatus, and retaken. Fabian, who had succeeded Chromatius, condemned them to be bound to two pillars, with their feet nailed to the same. In this posture they remained a day and night, and on the following day were stabbed with lances and buried in the Arenarium, since called their cemetery, two miles out of Rome, between the Appian and Ardeatine roads. All the ancient Martyrologies mark their festival on the 18th of June.

Virtue is often false, and in it the true metal is not to be distinguished from dross until persecution has applied the touchstone and proved the temper. We know not what we are till we have been tried. It costs nothing to say we love God above all things, and to show the courage of martyrs at a distance from danger; but that love is sincere which has stood the proof. "Persecution shows who is a hireling and who a true pastor," says St Bernard.<sup>1</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 18 :*

ST AMAND, Bishop of Bordeaux, who had served God from his infancy ; " a zealous guardian of religion and of the faith of Christ " : ST ELIZABETH, Abbess of Sconaugh, who, at twenty-two years old, began to be favoured with heavenly visions : ST EPHRIAM THE SYRIAN, a poet, an orator, and a very holy monk, proclaimed Doctor of the Church by Benedict XV in 1920; he died about 375 or 378 : ST MARCUS and ST MARCELLIANUS, martyrs : and ST MARIANA (or Marina ?), virgin.

<sup>1</sup> St Bern. lib. de Convers. ad Clericos. c. 22.



JUNE 19

## ST GERVASIUS AND ST PROTASIUS, MARTYRS

[From St Ambrose, Ep. 22, ol. 54, ad Marcellinam. Soror. and St Austin, de Civit. Dei, lib. xxii. c. 28, et lib. de Cura pro mortuis, c. 17, et Conf. lib. ix. c. 7. See Tillemont, t. ii. p. 78. Orsi; and for the history of the great veneration which has been always paid to their relics, see the learned Dissertation of Joseph Antony Sassi, prefect of the Ambrosian library, entitled, *Dissertatio Apologetica ad Vindicandam Mediolano Sanctorum Corporum Gervasii et Protasii possessionem*. Bononiæ, 1709. See also St Paulinus, Nat. St Felicit II, published by Muratori, Anecd. Lat., and in the new edition of St Paulinus's works at Verona, p. 468. Consult, above other moderns, the accurate Puricelli, Diss. Nazar. et Monum. Basilicæ Ambros.]

ST AMBROSE calls these saints the protomartyrs of Milan. They seem to have suffered in the first persecution under Nero, or at latest under Domitian, and are said to have been the sons of SS. Vitalis and Valeria,<sup>1</sup> both martyrs: the first at Ravenna, the second at Milan. This latter city was the place which SS. Gervasius and Protasius rendered illustrious by their glorious martyrdom and miracles. St Ambrose assures us that the divine grace prepared them a long time for their crown by the good example which they gave, and by the constancy with which they withstood the corruption of the world. He adds they were beheaded for the faith. They are said to have been twin brothers.

The faithful at Milan, in the fourth age, had lost the remembrance of these saints. Yet the martyrs had not ceased to assist that church in its necessities; and the discovery of their relics rescued it from the utmost danger. The Empress Justina, widow of Valentinian I, and mother of Valentinian the Younger, who then reigned and resided at Milan, was a violent abettor of Arianism and used her utmost endeavours to expel St Ambrose. The Arians did not stick to have recourse to the most horrible villainies and forgeries to compass that point. In so critical a conjuncture, our martyrs declared themselves the visible protectors of that distressed church. St Austin, both in his twenty-second book *Of the City of God*,<sup>2</sup> and in his *Confessions*,<sup>3</sup> says that God revealed to St Ambrose by a vision in a dream the place where their relics lay. Paulinus, in his life of St Ambrose, says this was done by an apparition of the martyrs themselves. The bishop was going to dedicate a new church, the same which was afterwards called the Ambrosian basilic and now St Ambrose the Great. The people desired him to do it with the same solemnity as he had already consecrated another church in the quarter near the gate that led to Rome, in honour of the holy apostles, in which he had lain a portion of their relics. He was at a loss to find relics for this second church. The bodies of SS. Gervasius and Protasius lay then unknown before the rails which enclosed the tomb of SS. Nabor and Felix. St Ambrose caused this place to be dug up, and there found the bodies of two very big men with their bones entire and in their natural position,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 22, ad Marcell. soror.<sup>2</sup> C. 8.<sup>3</sup> Conf. lib. ix. c. 7.

but the heads separated from their bodies, with a large quantity of blood, and all the marks which could be desired to ascertain the relics.

A possessed person, who was brought to receive the imposition of hands, before he began to be exorcised was seized and, in horrible convulsions, thrown down by the evil spirit upon the tomb.<sup>1</sup> The sacred relics were taken up whole and laid on litters in their natural situation, covered with ornaments, and conveyed to the basilic of Faustus, now called SS. Vitalis and Agricola, near that of St Nabor, which at present bears the name of St Francis. They were exposed here two days, and an incredible concourse of people watched the two nights in prayer. On the third day, which was the 18th of June, they were translated into the Ambrosian basilic with the honour due to martyrs, and with the public rejoicings of the whole city. In the way happened the famous cure of a blind man named Severus, a citizen of Milan, well known to the whole town. He had been a butcher, but was obliged, by the loss of his sight, to lay aside his profession. Hearing of the discovery of the relics, he desired to be conducted to the place where they were passing by, and upon touching the fringe of the ornaments with which they were covered, he that instant perfectly recovered his sight in the presence of an infinite multitude. This miracle is related by St Ambrose, St Austin, and Paulinus, who were all three then at Milan. Severus made a vow to be a servant in the church of the saints; that is, the Ambrosian basilic where their relics lay. St Austin, when he went from Milan in 387, left him in that service,<sup>2</sup> and he continued in it when Paulinus wrote the life of St Ambrose in 411. Many other lame and sick persons were cured of divers distempers by touching the shrouds which covered the relics, or linen cloths which had been thrown upon them. Devils also, in possessed persons, confessed the glory of the martyrs, and declared they were not able to bear the torments which they suffered in the presence of the bodies of the saints. All this is attested by St Ambrose in his letter to his sister, in which he has inserted the sermon which he preached in the Ambrosian basilic when the relics arrived there. Two days after he deposited them in the vault under the altar on the right hand. St Ambrose adds that the blood found in their tomb was likewise an instrument of many miracles. We find the relics of these saints afterwards dispersed in several churches, chiefly this blood, which was gathered and mixed with a paste, as St Gaudentius says.<sup>3</sup> Also linen cloths dipped in this blood were distributed in many places, as St Gregory of Tours relates.<sup>4</sup> St Austin mentions a church in their honour in his diocese of Hippo, where many miracles were wrought, and relates one that is very remarkable.<sup>5</sup> He preached his two hundred and eighty-sixth sermon on their festival in Africa, where we find it marked

<sup>1</sup> St Ambr. Ep. 22, ad Sor.

<sup>2</sup> De Glor. Mart. c. 47.

<sup>3</sup> St Aug. Sermon. 286.

<sup>4</sup> Lib. xxii. de Civ. Dei, c. 8.

<sup>5</sup> St Gaud. Sermon. 17.

in the old African Calendar on the 19th of June, on which day it was observed over all the West; and with great solemnity at Milan and in many dioceses and parish churches of which these martyrs are the titular saints. St Ambrose observes that the Arians at Milan, by denying the miracles of these martyrs, showed they had a different faith from that of the martyrs, otherwise they would not have been jealous of their miracles; but this faith, as he says, is confirmed by the tradition of our ancestors, which the devils are forced to confess, but which the heretics deny.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 19 :*

ST BONIFACE, Archbishop and martyr, apostle of Russia : ST DIE or DEODATUS, Bishop of Nevers, who, dreading the charge of others, lived in a little cell : ST GERVASIUS and ST PROTASIUS, martyrs : ST JULIANA FALCONIERI, who received the veil at the hands of St Philip Beniti in her sixteenth year, practised incredible austerities, and served the sick in the hospital with humility until her death at the age of seventy : and BLESSED SEBASTIAN NEWDIGATE, martyr.

JUNE 20

ST SILVERIUS, POPE, MARTYR

(A.D. 538)

[From Liberatus in Breviar. c. 22, Conc. t. v. p. 775 ; Marcellinus in Chron. ad ann. 536 ; Anastasius in Pontif. Conc. t. v. ; Papebroke, t. iv. Junij, p. 13 ; and Muratori's Annals of Italy.]

SILVERIUS was son of Pope Hormisdas, who had been engaged in wedlock before he entered the ministry. Upon the death of St Agapetus, after a vacancy of forty-seven days, Silverius being then sub-deacon, was chosen pope, and ordained on the 8th of June 536, Theodatus the Goth being King of Italy. Theodoric had bequeathed that kingdom to his grandson Athalaric, under the tuition of his mother Amalasunta, a most wise and learned princess. Athalaric died in 534, after a reign of eight years, when Amalasunta called Theodatus, a nephew of her father Theodoric by a sister, to the throne; but the ungrateful king, jealous of his power, caused her to be confined in an island in the lake of Bolsena, and there strangled in a bath before the end of the same year 534. The shocking barbarity of this action encouraged the Emperor Justinian to attempt the reduction of Italy. Belisarius, his general, had been successful in all his wars against rebels at home, the Persians in the East, and Gelimer the Vandal in Africa, whom he had brought prisoner to Constantinople in 534; by which victory he extinguished the puissant kingdom of the Vandals and reunited Africa to the empire, after it had been separated above one hundred years. By the emperor's order in 535, being then consul, he marched with his victorious army against Italy. He that year made himself master of Sicily, and, passing thence into Italy in 536, took Naples. Upon which the Goths deposed Theodatus and raised Vitiges, an experienced officer, to the throne. The senate and people of Rome, at the persuasion of Pope Silverius, opened the city to the imperialists, who entered by the Asinarian gate, whilst the

Gothic garrison retired by the Flaminian towards Ravenna, where Vitiges had shut himself up.

Theodora, the empress, a violent and crafty woman, seeing Justinian now master of Rome, resolved to make use of that opportunity to promote the sect of the Acephali, or most rigid Eutychian, who rejected the Council of Chalcedon; and also the Henoticon of Zeno, which Petrus Mongus, the Eutychian Patriarch of Alexandria, had received, endeavouring in some degree to qualify that heresy. Anthimus, Patriarch of Constantinople, was violently suspected of abetting the Acephali, and by the credit of the empress had been translated, against the canons, from the see of Trapezus, or Trebisonde, to that of the imperial city. When Pope Agapetus came to Constantinople in 536 he refused to communicate with Anthimus because he could never be brought to own in plain terms two natures in Christ, whereupon he was banished by Justinian; and St Mennas, an orthodox holy man, was ordained Bishop of Constantinople by Pope Agapetus himself who, by a circular letter, notified that "the heretical bishop had been deposed by the apostolic authority, with the concurrence and aid of the most religious emperor." This affair gave the empress great uneasiness, and she never ceased studying some method of recalling Anthimus, till the taking of Rome offered her a favourable opportunity of attempting to execute her design. Silverius being then in her power, she endeavoured to win him over to her interest, and wrote to him requiring that he would acknowledge Anthimus lawful bishop or repair in person to Constantinople and re-examine his cause on the spot. The good pope was sensible how dangerous a thing it was to oppose the favourite project of an empress of her violent temper; and said with a sigh, in reading her letter, that this affair would in the end cost him his life. However he, without the least hesitation or delay, returned her a short answer by which he peremptorily gave her to understand that she must not flatter herself he either could or would come into her unjust measures and betray the cause of the Catholic faith. The empress saw from the firmness of his answer that she could never expect from him anything favourable to her impious designs, and from that moment resolved to compass his deposition. Vigilus, archdeacon of the Roman church, a man of address, was then at Constantinople, whither he had attended the late Pope Agapetus. To him the empress made her application, and finding him taken by the bait of ambition, promised to make him pope and to bestow on him seven hundred pieces of gold provided he would engage himself to condemn the Council of Chalcedon and receive to communion the three deposed Eutychian patriarchs, Anthimus of Constantinople, Severus of Antioch, and Theodosius of Alexandria. The unhappy Vigilus, having assented to these conditions, the empress sent him to Rome, charged with a letter to Belisarius, commanding him to

drive out Silverius and to contrive the election of Vigilius to the pontificate. Belisarius was at first unwilling to have any hand in so unjust a proceeding; but after showing some reluctance he had the weakness to say, "The empress commands; I must therefore obey. He who seeks the ruin of St Silverius shall answer for it at the last day—not I."<sup>1</sup> Vigilius urged the general, on one side, to execute the project, and his wife Antonina on the other: she being the greatest confidant of the empress, and having no less an ascendant over her husband than Theodora had over Justinian.

The more easily to make this project to bear, the enemies of the good pope had recourse to a new stratagem and impeached him for high treason. Vitiges, the Goth, returned from Ravenna in 537 with an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men and invested the city of Rome. The siege lasted a year and nine days, during which both Goths and Romans performed prodigies of valour; but the latter defeated all the attempts and stratagems of the barbarians, and in the end obliged them to retire. The pope was accused of corresponding during the siege with the enemy; and a letter was produced which was pretended to have been written by him to the King of the Goths, inviting him into the city and promising to open the gates to him. Belisarius saw evidently this to be a barefaced calumny, and discovered the persons who had forged the said letter, namely Marcus, a lawyer, and Julianus, a soldier of the guards, who had both been suborned by the pope's enemies. The general, therefore, dropped this charge of treason, but entreated the pope to comply with the will of the empress, assuring him he had no other means of avoiding the loss of his see and the utmost calamities. Silverius always declared that he could never condemn the Council of Chalcedon nor receive the Acephali to his communion. Upon leaving the general's house he fled for sanctuary to the basilic of the martyr St Sabina; but a few days after, by an artful stratagem of Belisarius, was drawn thence and summoned to repair to the Pincian palace, where the general resided during the siege. He was admitted alone, and his clergy, whom he left at the door, saw him no more. Antonina received him sitting upon her bed, whilst Belisarius was seated at her feet; she loaded him with reproaches, and immediately a subdeacon tore the pall off his shoulders. He was then carried into another room, stripped of all his pontifical ornaments, and clothed with the habit of a monk. After this it was proclaimed that the pope was deposed and become a monk. Belisarius, the next day, caused Vigilius to be chosen pope, and he was ordained on the 22nd of November 537. In the meantime Silverius was conducted into banishment to Patara, in Lycia. The bishop of that city received the illustrious exile with all possible marks of honour and respect; and, thinking himself bound to undertake his defence, soon after the pope's arrival repaired to Constantinople and,

<sup>1</sup> Anastas. in Pontif.

having obtained a private audience, spoke boldly to the emperor, terrifying him with the threats of the divine judgments for the expulsion of the bishop of so great a see, telling him, "There are many kings in the world; but there is only one pope over the church of the whole world." It must be observed that these were the words of an oriental bishop, and a clear confession of the supremacy of the Roman see. Justinian, who had not been sufficiently apprized of the matter, appeared startled at the atrocity of the proceedings, and gave orders that Silverius should be sent back to Rome, and in case he was not convicted of the treasonable intelligence with the Goths, that he should be restored to his see; but if found guilty, should be removed to some other see. Belisarius and Vigilius were uneasy at this news; and foreseeing that if the order of the emperor was carried into execution, the consequence would necessarily be the restoration of Silverius to his dignity, they contrived to prevent it, and the pope was intercepted in his road towards Rome. His enemies saw themselves again masters of his person; and Antonina, resolving at any rate to gratify the empress, prevailed with Belisarius to deliver up the pope to Vigilius, with full power to secure him as he should think fit. The ambitious rival put him into the hands of two of his officers, called the defenders of the church, who conveyed him into the little inhospitable island of Palmaria, now called Palmeruelo, over against Terracina, and near two other abandoned desert islands, the one called Pontia, now Ponza; and the other Pandataria, now Vento Tiene. In this place Silverius died in a short time of hard usage—Liberatus, from hearsay, tells us of hunger; but Procopius, a living witness, says he was murdered at the instigation of Antonina by one Eugenia, a woman devoted to their service. The death of Pope Silverius happened on the 20th of June 538. Vigilius was an ambitious intruder and a schismatic so long as St Silverius lived; but after his death became lawful pope by the ratification or consent of the Roman church, and from that time renounced the errors and commerce of the heretics. He afterwards suffered much for his steadfast adherence to the truth; and though he entered as a mercenary and a wolf, he became the support of the orthodox faith.

The providence of God in the protection of his church never appears more visible than when he suffers tyrants or scandals seemingly almost to overwhelm it. Then does he most miraculously interpose in its defence, to show that nothing can make void his promises. Neither scandals nor persecutions can make his word fail, or overcome the church which he planted at so dear a rate. He will never suffer the devil to wrest out of his hands the inheritance which his Father gave him, and that kingdom which it cost him his most precious blood to establish, that his Father might always have true adorers on earth, by whom his name shall be forever glorified. In the tenth century, by the power and intrigues of

Marozia, wife to Guy, Marquis of Tuscany, and her mother and sister, both called Theodora, three women of scandalous lives, several unworthy popes were intruded into the apostolic chair, and ignorance and scandals gained ground in some parts. Yet at that very time many churches were blessed with pastors of eminent sanctity, and many saints preached penance with wonderful success; nor did any considerable heresy arise in all that century. Pride, indeed, and a conceit of learning are the usual source of that mischief. But this constant conservation of the church can only be ascribed to the singular protection of God, who watches over his church that it never fail.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 20 :*

ST BAIN, Bishop of Terouanne, now St Omer : BLESSED FRANCIS PACHECO, S.J., martyr : ST GOBAN of Ireland, ordained by St Fursey, martyred in France by barbarians from Germany : ST IDABERGA or EDBERGE, one of many saints belonging to the family of Penda, King of Mercia, an obstinate enemy to the name of Christ : and ST SILVERIUS, Pope and martyr

JUNE 21

## ST ALOYSIUS (OR LEWIS) GONZAGA, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1591)

[From his life, written in the most authentic manner by F. Ceparius, his master of novices. See also other memoirs collected by Janning, the Bollandist, Junij, t. iv. p. 847, ad p. 1169, and his life in French by F. Orleans.]

ALOYSIUS GONZAGA was son of Ferdinand Gonzaga, prince of the holy empire, and Marquis of Castiglione, removed in the third degree of kindred from the Duke of Mantua. His mother was Martha Tana Santena, daughter of Tanus Santena, lord of Cherry, in Piedmont. She was lady of honour to Isabel, the wife of Philip II of Spain, in whose court the Marquis Gonzaga also lived in great favour. When she understood this nobleman had asked her in marriage both of the king and queen, and of her friends in Italy, being a lady of remarkable piety, she spent her time in fasting and prayer in order to learn the will of heaven and to draw down upon herself the divine blessing. The marriage was solemnized in the most devout manner, the parties at the same time performing their devotions for the jubilee. When they left the court and returned into Italy, the marquis was declared chamberlain to his majesty and general of part of the army in Lombardy, with a grant of several estates. The marchioness made it her earnest petition to God that he would bless her with a son, who should devote himself entirely to his love and service. Our saint was born in the castle of Castiglione, in the diocese of Brescia, on the 9th of March 1568. William, Duke of Mantua, stood godfather and gave him the name of Aloysius. The holy names of Jesus and Mary, with the sign of the cross and part of the catechism, were the first words which his devout mother taught him as soon as he was able to speak; and from her example and repeated

instructions the deepest sentiments of religion and the fear of God were impressed upon his tender soul. Even in his infancy he showed an extraordinary tenderness for the poor; and such was his devotion that he frequently hid himself in corners where, after long search, he was always found at his prayers, in which, so amiable was his piety and so heavenly did his recollection appear, that he seemed to resemble an angel clothed with a human body. His father designing to train him up to the army, in order to give him an inclination to that state furnished him with little guns and other weapons, took him to Casal to show him a muster of three thousand Italian foot, and was much delighted to see him carry a little pike and walk before the ranks. The child stayed there some months, during which time he learned from the officers certain unbecoming words, the meaning of which he did not understand, not being then seven years old. But his tutor hearing him use bad words, chid him for it, and from that time he could never bear the company of any persons who in his hearing ever profaned the holy name of God. This offence, though excusable by his want of age and knowledge, was to him during his whole life a subject of perpetual humiliation, and he never ceased to bewail and accuse himself of it with extreme confusion and compunction. Entering the seventh year of his age, he began to conceive greater sentiments of piety, and from that time he used to date his conversion to God. At that age, being come back to Castiglione, he began to recite every day the office of Our Lady, the seven penitential psalms, and other prayers, which he always said on his knees and without a cushion—a custom which he observed all his life. Cardinal Bellarmin, three other confessors, and all who were best acquainted with his interior declared after his death their firm persuasion that he had never offended God mortally in his whole life. He was sick of an ague at Castiglione eighteen months, yet never omitted his task of daily prayers, though he sometimes desired some of his servants to recite them with him.

When he was recovered, being now eight years old, his father placed him and his younger brother Ralph in the polite court of his good friend, Francis of Medicis, Grand Duke of Tuscany, that they might learn the Latin and Tuscan languages and other exercises suitable to their rank. At Florence the saint made such progress in the science of the saints that he afterwards used to call that city the mother of his piety. His devotion to the Blessed Virgin was much inflamed by reading a little book of Gaspar Loartes on the mysteries of the Rosary. He at the same time conceived a great esteem for the virtue of holy chastity; and he received from God so perfect a gift of the same that in his whole life he never felt the least temptation, either in mind or body, against purity, as Jerom Platus and Cardinal Bellarmin assure us from his own mouth. He cultivated this extraordinary grace by assiduous prayer, universal mortification, and the



most watchful flight of all occasions; being well apprized that this virtue is so infinitely tender that it fades and dies if blown upon by the least vapour; and that it is a bright and clear mirror, which is tarnished with the least breath, and even by the sight. He never looked at any woman, kept his eyes strictly guarded and generally cast down, would never stay with his mother alone in her chamber; and if she sent any message to him by some lady in her company, he received it and gave his answer in a few words, with his eyes shut, and his chamber door only half open; and when bantered on that score, he ascribed such behaviour to his bashfulness. It was owing to his virginal modesty that he did not know by their faces many ladies among his own relations with whom he had frequently conversed, and that he was afraid and ashamed to let a footman see so much as his foot uncovered. But humility, which is the mother of all virtues, was in our saint the guardian of his purity. He never spoke to his servants by way of command, but with such modesty that they were ashamed not to obey. He would only say to them, "Pray despatch this or that; You may do this"; or, "If it be no trouble, you may do this or that." No novice could practise a more exact and ready obedience than Aloysius set an example of towards all his superiors, especially Francis Tuccius, whom his father had appointed tutor to his sons, and governor of their family at Florence.

The two young princes had stayed there a little more than two years when their father removed them to Mantua and placed them in the court of the Duke William Gonzaga, who had made him governor of Montserrat. Aloysius left Florence in November 1579, when he was eleven years and eight months old. He at that time took a resolution to resign to his brother Ralph his title to the marquisate at Castiglione, though he had already received the investiture from the emperor. And the ambitious or covetous man is not more greedy of honours or riches than this young prince, from a better principle, appeared desirous to see himself totally disengaged from the ties of the world, by entirely renouncing its false pleasures, which begin with uneasiness and terminate in remorse, and are no better than real pains covered over with a bewitching varnish. He knew the true delights which virtue brings, which are solid without alloy and capable of filling the capacity of man's heart; and these he thirsted after. In the meantime he fell sick of an obstinate retention of urine, of which distemper he cured himself only by the rigorous rules of abstinence which he observed. He took the opportunity of this indisposition to rid himself more than ever of company and business, seldom going abroad, and spending most of his time in reading Surius's *Lives of Saints* and other books of piety and devotion. It being the custom in Italy and other hot climates to pass the summer months in the country, the marquis sent for his sons from Mantua to Castiglione in that season. Aloysius pursued the same exercises and the same manner of life in the town, at court, and

in the country. The servants who watched him in his chamber saw him employed in prayer many hours together, sometimes prostrate on the ground before a crucifix, or standing up, absorbed in God so as to appear in an ecstasy. When he went downstairs they took notice that at every standing-place he said a Hail Mary. It was in this retirement that his mind was exceedingly enlightened by God, and without the help of any instructor he received an extraordinary gift of mental prayer, to which his great purity of heart and sincere humility disposed his soul. He sometimes passed whole days in contemplating, with inexpressible sweetness and devotion, the admirable dispensations of divine providence in the great mysteries of our redemption, especially the infinite goodness and love of God, his mercy and other attributes. In this exercise he was not able to contain the spiritual joy of his soul in considering the greatness and goodness of his God, nor to moderate his tears. Falling at last on a little book of Father Canisius which treated of Meditation, and on certain letters of the Jesuit missionaries in the Indies, he felt a strong inclination to enter the Society of Jesus, and was inflamed with an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls. He began even then to frequent the schools of Christian Doctrine, and to encourage other boys, especially among the poor, in learning their catechism, and often instructed them himself. So excellently did he then discourse of God as astonished grown persons of learning and abilities. It happened that, in 1580, St Charles Borromeo came to Brescia in quality of apostolic visitor and preached there on the feast of Mary Magdalen. No importunities of the marquis or other princes could prevail upon that great saint to visit them at their country seats, or to take up his lodgings anywhere but with the clergy of the churches where he came. Wherefore Aloysius, being only twelve years old, went to Brescia to receive his blessing. It is incredible how much the good cardinal was taken with the piety and generous sentiments of the young prince. But finding that he had never yet received the holy communion, he exhorted him to prepare himself for that divine sacrament, and to receive it very frequently; prescribing him rules for his devout preparation, and with regard to many other practices of piety; all which the holy youth constantly observed, remembering ever after with wonderful joy the happiness of having seen so great a saint. He from that time conceived so tender a devotion to the blessed eucharist that in hearing mass, after the consecration, he often melted into tears, in profound sentiments of love and adoration; and he frequently received wonderful favours in communicating; and this holy sacrament became his greatest comfort and joy. The marquis after this carried his whole family to Casal, the residence of his government of Montserrat. There the saint made the convents of the Capuchins and Barnabites the usual places of his resort. He fasted three days a week, Fridays at least, on bread and water, boiled

together for his whole dinner; his collation was a little piece of dry bread. On other days his meals were so slender that his life seemed almost a miracle. He secretly thrust a board into his bed to rest on in the night, and rose at midnight to pray, even in the coldest season of winter, which is very sharp under the Alps. He spent an hour after rising and two hours before going to bed in private prayer.

In 1581 his father attended the Empress Mary of Austria, wife to Maximilian II and sister to Philip II of Spain, in her journey from Bohemia to Spain, and took with him his three children: a daughter named Isabel, who died in Spain, and his two sons, who were both made by King Philip pages to his son James, elder brother to Philip III. Aloysius was then thirteen years and a half old. He continued his studies, but never neglected his long meditations and devotions, which he often performed by stealth in secret corners. Though he every day waited on the Infant of Spain, James, to pay his duty to the empress, he never once looked on the face of that princess or took notice of her person; and so great was his guard over all his senses, and so universal his spirit of mortification, that it was a proverb at court that the young Marquis of Castiglione seemed not to be made of flesh and blood. Whilst he remained in Spain he found great pleasure and benefit in reading Lewis of Granada's excellent book on Mental Prayer. He prescribed himself a daily task of an hour's meditation, which he often prolonged to three, four, or five hours. He at length determined to enter into the Society of Jesus, in order to devote himself to the instructing and conducting souls to God; and he was confirmed in this resolution by his confessor, who was one of that Order. When he disclosed it to his parents, his mother rejoiced exceedingly; but his father, in excessive grief and rage, said he would have him scourged naked. "O that it would please God," replied, modestly, the holy youth, "to grant me so great a favour as to suffer that for his love." What heightened the father's indignation was a suspicion that this was a contrivance on account of his custom of gaming, by which he had lately lost six hundred crowns in one evening—a vice which his son bitterly deplored, not so much, as he used to say, for the loss of the money as for the injury done to God. However, the consent of the marquis was at length extorted through the mediation of friends. The Infant, or Prince of Spain, dying of a fever, Aloysius was at liberty, and after two years' stay in Spain, returned to Italy in July 1584 on board the galleys of the famous John Andrew Doria, whom his Catholic Majesty had lately appointed admiral. His brother travelled in rich apparel, but the saint in a suit of black Flanders serge. In his journey he either conversed on holy things, or entertained himself secretly in his heart with God. As soon as he came to an inn he sought some private little chamber and fell to prayer on his knees. In visiting religious houses he went first to the

church and prayed some time before the blessed sacrament. When he had arrived at Castiglione, he had new assaults to bear, from the eloquence and authority of a cardinal, many bishops, and eminent men, employed by the Duke of Mantua and his own uncles; yet he remained firm, and brought over some of these ambassadors to his side, so that they pleaded in his favour. But his father flew back from his consent, loaded his son with opprobrious language, and employed him in many distracting secular commissions. The saint had recourse to God by prostrating himself before a crucifix and redoubling his severities; till the marquis, no longer able to oppose his design, cordially embraced him and recommended him to Claudius Aquaviva, general of the Society, who appointed Rome for the place of his novitiate. The father repented again of his consent and detained his son nine months at Milan, during which time he used the most tender entreaties and every other method to bring him from his purpose. He again removed him to Mantua, and thence to Castiglione; but finding his resolution invincible, left him at liberty, saying to him, "Dear son, your choice is a deep wound in my heart. I ever loved you, as you always deserved. In you I had founded the hopes of my family; but you tell me God calls you another way. Go, therefore, in his name, whither you please, and may his blessing everywhere attend you." Aloysius, having thanked him, withdrew, that he might not increase his grief by his presence, and betook himself to his prayers. His cession of the marquisate to his brother Ralph, with the reserve of two thousand crowns in ready money, and four thousand crowns a year for life, was ratified by the emperor, and the writings were delivered at Mantua in November 1585. The excessive grief and tears of his subjects and vassals at his departure only drew from him these words: "That he sought nothing but the salvation of his soul, and exhorted them all to the same." Arriving at Rome, he visited the churches and chief places of devotion, then kissed the feet of Pope Sixtus V, and entered his novitiate at St Andrew's on the 25th of November 1585, not being completely eighteen years old. Being conducted to his cell, he entered it as a celestial paradise, in which he was to have no other employment than that of praising God without interruption; and exulting in his heart, he repeated with the prophet, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have chosen it."

The saint, in his noviceship, condemned himself as guilty of sloth if he did not in every religious duty surpass in fervour all his companions; he respected them all, and he behaved himself towards them as if he had been the last person in the family, and indeed such he always reputed himself. He loved and rejoiced most in the meanest and most contemptible employments. His mortifications, though great, were not so severe as he had practised in the world, because limited by obedience, which gave a merit to all his actions. He used to say that a religious state in this

resembles a ship, in which they sail as fast who sit idle as they who sweat at the oar in rowing. Yet such was the general mortification of his senses that he seemed totally inattentive to exterior things, only inasmuch as they regarded God. He never took notice of the difference of villas where he had been, the order of the refectory in which he every day ate, or the rich ornaments of the chapels and altars where he prayed. He seemed entirely inattentive to the taste of what he ate, only he endeavoured to avoid whatever seemed savoury. He never listened to reports or to discourse about worldly matters; spoke very little, and never about himself, thinking himself justly deserving to be forgotten by the whole world, and to be made no account of in everything. He was a capital enemy to any artifice or dissimulation, which he called the bane and canker of Christian simplicity. Nothing gave him so much mortification as the least marks of honour or distinction. It was his delight to carry a wallet through the streets of Rome, begging from door to door, to serve the poor and the hospitals, or to sweep the kitchen and carry away the filth, in which actions he usually had before his eyes Christ humbled for us. On holidays he used to catechise the children of poor labourers. He changed his new gilt breviary for an old one, and often did so in his habit and other things. His whole life seemed a continued prayer, and he called holy meditation the short way to Christian perfection. He found in that exercise the greatest spiritual delights, and remained in it on his knees, as if he were motionless, in a posture of wonderful recollection and respect. It is not possible to describe the sweet raptures and abundant tears which often accompanied his devotion, especially in presence of the blessed eucharist, and after communicating. He spent the three first days after communion in thanksgiving for that inestimable favour, and the three following in languishing aspirations and desires to receive on the Sunday his Saviour, his God, his Physician, his King, and his Spouse; on the eve of his communion his mind was wholly taken up with the dignity and infinite importance and advantages of that great action, nor could he speak of anything else. Such was the fire of his words whenever he spoke on that mystery of love that it inflamed all who heard him. He made every day at least four regular visits to pray before the blessed sacrament. The passion of Christ was also a most tender object of his devotion. From his infancy he had chosen the Blessed Virgin for his special patroness and advocate. He had a singular devotion to the holy angels, especially his angel guardian. In the beginning of his noviceship he was tried by an extreme spiritual dryness and interior desolation of soul, which served perfectly to purify his heart, and was succeeded by the greatest heavenly consolations. He bore the pious death of his father with unshaken constancy, because he considered it and all other events purely in the view of the divine will and providence. It happened six weeks after Aloysius had taken the habit. From

the day on which his son had left him to enter the Society, the marquis had entirely devoted himself to the practice of perfect virtue and penance.

Humility and obedience were the young novice's favourite virtues, and by them he gained a perfect mastery over himself. To appear poor, little, and contemptible was his delight, and he rejoiced to see the last and worst portion in anything fall to his share. He was never known guilty of the least transgression of the rule of silence or any other; and feared to arrive one moment too late at any duty. He would not, without the leave of his master, speak one word even to his kinsman, Cardinal Roborei; nor would he ever stay with him so long as to fail one minute in any rule. It happened that the pious and learned Jerom Platus, whilst he was his master of novices, thinking his perpetual application to prayer and study prejudicial to his health, ordered him to spend in conversing with others after dinner, not only the hour allotted for all, but also the half hour longer which is allowed to those who dined at the second table. Father minister, not knowing this order, punished him for it, and obliged him publicly to confess his fault; which he underwent without offering excuse. The minister learning afterwards how the matter was, admired very much his silence, but for his greater merit enjoined him another penalty for not telling him the order of his master. The saint bore in silence and joy the imputation and chastisement of the faults of any others, because this afforded him an opportunity of exercising patience, meekness, and humility. By a habit of continual application of his mind to God, attention at prayer seemed so easy and natural to him that he told his superior, who put to him that question, that if all the involuntary distractions at his devotions during six months were joined together, they would not amount to the space of one Hail Mary. His health decaying, he was forbid to meditate or pray, except at regular times. This he found the hardest task of his whole life, so great a struggle did it cost him to resist the impulse with which his heart was carried towards God. For the recovery of his health he was sent to Naples, where he stayed half a year, and then returned to Rome. In that city, after completing his novitiate of two years, he made his religious vows on the 20th of November 1587, and soon after received minor orders.

Aloysius had finished his logic whilst a page in the Spanish court, and his course of natural philosophy during his nine months' stay at Milan. After this he commenced student in divinity under Gabriel Vasquez and other celebrated professors; but a family contest obliged him to interrupt his studies. His uncle, Horatius Gonzaga, died without issue, and bequeathed by will his estate of Sulphurino to the Duke of Mantua. Ralph, the saint's brother, pleaded that the donation was invalid, the estate being a fief of the empire, which inalienably devolves on the next heir in blood, and he obtained a rescript of the Emperor Maximilian

in his favour. But the duke refused to acquiesce in this sentence; and the Archduke Ferdinand and several other princes had in vain attempted to reconcile the two cousins. At length St Aloysius was sent for to be the mediator of peace. He had then just finished his second year of divinity, and was at the Jesuit's villa at Frescati during the vacation when Father Robert Bellarmin brought him an order from the general to repair to Mantua about this affair. A discreet lay-brother was appointed to be his companion, to whom a charge was given to take care of his health, with an order to Aloysius to obey him as to that particular. Most edifying were the examples of his profound humility, mortification, love of poverty, and devotion, and incredible the fruits of his zeal, both on the road and at Mantua, Castiglione, and other places where he went. Though both parties were exceedingly exasperated, no sooner did this angel of peace appear than they were perfectly reconciled. The duke, though before much incensed, was entirely disarmed by the sight and moving discourse of the saint; he readily pardoned and yielded up the estate to the marquis, who as easily consented to bury in oblivion all that had passed, and the two cousins made a sincere and strict alliance and friendship together. Many others who were at variance, or at law, were in the same manner made friends by the means of the saint's friendly interposing. No enmity seemed able to withstand the spirit of meekness and charity which his words and whole deportment breathed. Great numbers were by him converted from sinful habits, and many brought to a profession of perfect virtue. His brother Ralph had fallen in love with a young gentlewoman, much inferior to him in birth, and had secretly married her before private witnesses, but durst not publish his marriage for fear of offending his uncle, Alphonsus Gonzaga, lord of Castle-Godfrey, whose heir he was to be. The saint represented to him that by such a conduct, notwithstanding his precaution, he offended God by the scandal he gave to his subjects and others, who looked upon his behaviour as criminal. He, moreover, undertook to satisfy his uncle, mother, and other friends, and thus engaged him publicly to declare his marriage, and the uncle, and others, through the saint's mediation, took no offence at the alliance. Aloysius having happily restored peace among all his relations, and settled them in the practice of true virtue, by the direction of his superiors went to Milan on the 22nd of March 1590, there to pursue his theological studies. These he accompanied with his usual exercises of devotion and all virtues, especially humility, to nourish and improve which in his heart he embraced every kind of humiliation. He often begged to serve in the kitchen and refectory, and it was his delight to draw water for the cook, wash the dishes, cover the table, or sweep the scullery. Whilst he was at Milan one day in his morning prayer, he was favoured with a revelation that he had only a short time to live. And by this heavenly visitation he found

his mind wonderfully changed, and more than ever weaned from all transitory things. This favour he afterwards disclosed at Rome, in great simplicity, to F. Vincent Bruno and others. The general would not suffer him to finish his studies at Milan, but recalled him to Rome in November the same year, to perform there the fourth or last year of his theological course. The saint chose a dark and very small chamber over the staircase in the garret, with one window in the roof; nor had he in it any other furniture than a poor bed, a wooden chair, and a little stool to lay his books upon. He appeared even in the schools and cloisters quite absorbed in God, and often at table, or with his companions at recreation time after dinner, he fell into ecstasies and appeared unable to contain the excessive heavenly joy with which his soul overflowed. He frequently spoke in raptures on the happiness of dying, the more speedily to enjoy God.

In 1591 an epidemical distemper swept off great multitudes in Rome. In this public distress the fathers of the Society erected a new hospital, in which the general himself, with other assistants, served the sick. Aloysius obtained by earnest entreaties to be one of this number. He catechised and exhorted the poor patients, washed their feet, made their beds, changed their clothes, and performed with wonderful assiduity and tenderness the most painful and loathsome offices of the hospital. The distemper being pestilential and contagious, several of these fathers died martyrs of charity and Aloysius fell sick. It was on the 3rd of March 1591 that he took to his bed, at which time he was overwhelmed with excessive joy at the thought that he was called to go to his God. This joy gave him afterwards a scruple whether it was not immoderate; but his confessor, who was the famous Cardinal Bellarmin, comforted him, saying that it is not an unusual grace to desire death, not out of impatience, but to be united to God. The pestilential fever in seven days became so violent that the saint received the viaticum and extreme unction. However, he recovered; but from the relics of this distemper succeeded a hectic fever, which in three months reduced him to an excessive weakness. He studied to add continual mortifications to the pains of his disease, and rose in the night to pray before a crucifix till, being caught by the infirmarian, he was forbid doing so for the future; which direction he punctually obeyed. The physicians having ordered him and another sick brother to take a very bitter draught, the other drank it at once with the ordinary helps to qualify the bitterness of the taste; but Aloysius sipped it slowly and, as it were, drop by drop, that he might have the longer and fuller taste of what was mortifying; nor did he give the least sign of perceiving any disagreeable taste. After speaking with Father Bellarmin on the happiness of speedily enjoying God, he fell into a rapture through excess of inward delights, and it continued almost the whole night, which seemed to him in the morning to have been but one moment, as he told



Father Bellarmin. It seems to have been in this ecstasy that he learned he should die on the Octave day of Corpus-Christi, which he often clearly foretold. In thanksgiving for his death being so near, he desired one to recite the *Te Deum*; with which request the other complied. To another he cried out, his heart exulting with joy, "My father, we go rejoicing! we go rejoicing!" He said every evening the seven penitential psalms with another person in great compunction. On the Octave day he seemed better, and the rector had thoughts of sending him to Frescati. But he repeated still that he should die before next morning, and he received the viaticum and extreme unction. At night he was thought to be in no immediate danger, and was left with two brothers to watch by him. These, about midnight, perceived on a sudden by a wanness and violent sweat with which he was seized that he was falling into his agony. His most usual aspirations during his illness were the ardent languishings of a soul aspiring to God, extracted from the psalms. After saying, "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit," he frequently repeated the holy name of Jesus; with which sacred word he expired a little after midnight, between the 20th and 21st day of June, the Octave of Corpus-Christi that year, 1591, being twenty-three years, three months, and eleven days old, of which he had lived five years and almost seven months in the Society. He was buried in the Church of the Annunciation, belonging to the Jesuits of the Roman college. A rich chapel being afterwards built in that church under his name by the Marquis Scipio Lancelotti, his relics were translated into it. St Aloysius was beatified by Gregory XV in 1621 and canonized by Benedict XIII in 1726. Ceparius gives a history of many miracles wrought through the intercession and by the relics of this saint, several being cures of noblemen and eminent prelates. A much more ample history of his miracles may be read in Janning, the Bollandist, in an Appendix to the life of St Aloysius.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 21:*

ST AARON, Abbot in Brittany in the sixth century, when St Malo came into France: ST ALOYSIUS, patron of Catholic youth: THE BLESSED MARTYRS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, of Canada: ST EUSEBIUS, Bishop and martyr: ST LEOFRIDUS, in French LEUFROI, Abbot, honoured with an office in the New Paris Breviary (in Butler's time): ST MEEN (in Latin MEVENNUS, also MELANOS), Abbot in Brittany: and ST RALPH, of the royal blood of France; he took the monastic habit in 822, was made Archbishop of Bourges in 840; compiled a book of canons (Pastoral Instructions) for the direction of his clergy.

## JUNE 22

### ST ALBAN, PROTOMARTYR OF BRITAIN

(A.D. 303)

[From Bede, Usher's Collections, &c., his Ancient Life, and the English-Saxon abstract of it, in Bibl. cotton. Julius, A. x.]

THE Christian faith had penetrated into Britain in the times of the apostles, and had received an increase by the conversion of King Lucius,

in the year 180. But the first persecutions seem not to have reached this island, where perhaps the Christians, in times of danger, retired to places distant from the Roman colonies; or the mildness of their governors, in a province so remote as to seem another world, might sometimes shelter them. But the rage of Diocletian penetrated into these recesses, and many of both sexes here received, by unheard-of torments, the crown of martyrdom, as Gildas and Bede testify. The first and most renowned of these Christian heroes was St Alban, whose death was rendered more illustrious by many miracles and other extraordinary circumstances, and whose blood was an agreeable sacrifice to God, a glorious testimony to the honour of his name and to his holy faith, and a fruitful seed of divine blessings on this country. So great was the glory of his triumph that his name was most famous over the whole church, as Fortunatus assures us.<sup>1</sup> A copy of the ancient Acts of his Martyrdom was published by Bishop Usher, and the principal circumstances are mentioned by St Gildas and recorded by venerable Bede.<sup>2</sup>

Alban seems to have been a Roman name, and this saint seems to have been a person of note, as some ancient monuments, quoted by Leland, Usher, Alford, and Cressy, affirm. He was a native of Verulam, which was for many ages one of the strongest and most populous cities in Britain till, having suffered much by sieges under the Saxon conquest, it fell to decay, and the present town of St Alban's rose up close by its ruins, of which no vestiges are now to be seen, except some broken foundations or walls and chequered pavements and Roman coins have been often dug up there.<sup>3</sup> The river Werlame ran on the east and the great Roman highway, called Watling-street, lay on the west side of the town. Alban travelled to Rome in his youth to improve himself in learning and in all the polite arts, as appears by authorities which the judicious Leland produces. Being returned home, he settled at Verulam and lived there with some dignity, for he seems to have been one of the principal citizens of the place. Though a stranger to the Christian faith, he was hospitable and compassionate; and in recompense of his charitable disposition, God was pleased to conduct him to the light of the gospel and to discover to him the inestimable jewel of immortal life. He was yet a pagan when the edicts of the emperors against the Christians began to be put rigorously in execution in Britain. A certain clergyman, called by some writers Amphibalus, sought by flight to escape the fury of the persecutors, and Alban afforded him a shelter and kindly entertained him in his house. Our saint was much edified by the holy deportment of this stranger and admired his faith and piety, and in particular his assiduity in prayer in which the faithful servant of God watched night and day. Alban was

<sup>1</sup> Fortun. Poëm.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. lib. i. c. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See the map and description of the ancient Verulamium, published by Dr Will. Stukelie in 1720, among the prints of the Society of Antiquaries.

soon engaged to listen to his wholesome admonitions and instructions, and in a short time became a Christian. And with such ardour did he open his heart to the divine grace that he was at once filled with the perfect spirit of this holy religion, and, rejoicing that he had found so precious a treasure, he no longer regarded anything else, despising for it the whole world and life itself. He had harboured this apostolic man some days when an information was given in to the governor that the preacher of the Christian religion, after whom the strictest inquiry was making, lay hid at Alban's house. Soldiers were despatched thither to make diligent search after the man of God, but he was then secretly fled. Christ promises that he who receives a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall meet with the recompense of a prophet. This was fulfilled in Alban, who, by entertaining a confessor of Christ, received the grace of faith and the crown of martyrdom. He exchanged clothes with his guest, that the preacher might more easily escape in that disguise to carry the news of salvation to others; and himself put on the stranger's long robe, called "caracalla." Alban, earnestly desiring to shed his blood for Christ, whom he had but just learned to know, presented himself boldly in this habit to the soldiers, and was by them bound and led to the judge, who happened at that very time to be standing at the altar and offering sacrifice to his idols. When he saw Alban, he was highly provoked at the cheat which the saint had put upon him by substituting himself for his guest, and ordering him to be dragged before the images of his gods, he said, "As you have chosen to conceal a sacrilegious person and a blasphemer, the punishment which he should have suffered shall fall upon you, in case you refuse to comply with the worship of our religion." The saint answered, with a noble courage, that he would never obey such an order. The magistrate then asked him of what family he was. Alban replied, "To what purpose do you inquire of my family? If you would know my religion, I am a Christian." The judge asked his name, to which he answered, "My name is Alban, and I worship the only true and living God, who created all things." The magistrate said, "If you would enjoy the happiness of life, sacrifice instantly to the great gods." Alban replied, "The sacrifices you offer are made to devils, who neither help their votaries nor grant their petitions. Whoever shall sacrifice to these idols shall receive for his reward the everlasting pains of hell." The judge, enraged beyond measure at these words, commanded the holy confessor to be scourged; and seeing him bear with an unshaken constancy, and even with joy, the most cruel tortures, he at last condemned him to be beheaded. An exceeding great multitude of people went out to behold his execution, and the judge remained almost alone in the city without attendance. In the road was a river, and the stream in that part, which was pent up by a wall and sand, was exceeding rapid. So numerous was

the crowd that was gone out before that the martyr could scarce have passed the bridge that evening had he waited for them to go before him. Therefore, being impatient to arrive at his crown, he went to the bank and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, made a short prayer. Upon this the stream was miraculously divided and the river dried up in that part, so as to afford a passage to the martyr and a thousand persons.

This river must have been the Coln, which runs between old Verulam and the new St Alban's. The executioner was converted at the sight of this miracle and of the saintly behaviour of the martyr, and throwing away his naked sword, he fell at the feet of the saint, begging to die with him, or rather in his place. The sudden conversion of the headsman occasioned a delay in the execution. In the meantime the holy confessor with the crowd went up the hill, which was a most pleasant spot, covered with several sorts of flowers, about five hundred paces from the river. There Alban falling on his knees, at his prayer a fountain sprung up, with the water whereof he refreshed his thirst. A new executioner being found, he struck off the head of the martyr, but miraculously lost his eyes, which fell to the ground at the same time. Together with St Alban, the soldier who had refused to imbrue his hands in his blood, and had declared himself a Christian, was also beheaded, being baptized in his own blood. This soldier is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology. Capgrave calls him Heraclius, some others Araclius. Many of the spectators were converted to the faith, and, following the holy priest who had converted St Alban into Wales, to the number of one thousand, received the sacrament of baptism at his hands, as Harpsfield's memoirs relate; but these converts were all cut to pieces by the idolaters for their faith. The priest was brought back and stoned to death at Radburn, three miles from St Alban's, as Thomas Radburn, who was born in that place, Matthew Paris, and others affirm, from ancient records kept in St Alban's abbey. This priest is called by Geoffrey of Monmouth and others St Amphibalus, though Bishop Usher conjectures that Greek name to have been borrowed from his garment, the Caracalla. Bede testifies that St Alban suffered martyrdom on the 22nd of June, some say in the year 286, but most in 303, when Diocletian began his great persecution, to which Constantius put a stop in Britain the year following. Some moderns are offended at the above-mentioned miracles; but the ingenious Mr Collier writes thus concerning them: "As for St Alban's miracles, being attested by authors of such credit, I do not see why they should be questioned. That miracles were wrought in the church at that time of day is clear from the writings of the ancients. To imagine that God should exert his omnipotence, and appear supernaturally for his servants, in no age since the apostles is an unreasonable fancy. For since the world was not all converted by the apostles, why should we not believe that God should honour his servants

with the most undisputed credentials? Why, then, should St Alban's miracles be disbelieved, the occasion being great enough for so extraordinary an interposition?" &c. These miracles of stopping the river, and of the spring rising in the place where St Alban was beheaded, are expressly mentioned by Gildas, Bede, and others. The place was called, in the Anglo-Saxon language, Holm-hurst, Hurst signifying a wood; and this place was once overgrown with trees, as Bishop Usher proves. In aftertimes it obtained the name of Derswoldwood, and was the spot on which the present town of St Alban's is built. In the time of Constantine the Great, a magnificent church of admirable workmanship was erected on the place where the martyr suffered, and was rendered illustrious by frequent great miracles, as Bede testifies.<sup>1</sup> The pagan Saxons destroyed this edifice; but Offa, King of the Mercians, raised another in 793, with a great monastery, on which he bestowed most ample possessions. Several popes honoured it with the most singular privileges and exemptions, and all the lands possessed by it were freed from the payment of the Romescot, or Peterpence. The church is still standing, having been redeemed from destruction when the abbey was suppressed under Henry VIII. It was purchased by the townsmen to be their parochial church for the sum of four hundred pounds, which, according to the present value of money, would be above seven times as much. Our island, for many ages, had recourse to St Alban as its glorious protomartyr and powerful patron with God, and acknowledged many great favours received from God through his intercession. By it St Germanus procured a triumph without Christian blood, and gained a complete victory both over the spiritual and corporal enemies of this country. Of the rich shrine of St Alban, most munificently adorned by Offa, by his son Egfrig, and many succeeding kings and others, nothing is now remaining, as Weever writes,<sup>2</sup> but a marble stone to cover the place where the dust of the sacred remains lies. Over against which, on a wall, some verses are lately painted, says the same author, to tell us there was formerly a shrine in that place. A village in Forez, in France, a league and a half from Rouanne, bears the name of St Alban, famous for mineral waters, abounding with nitrous salt, described by Mr Spon and Piganiol, t. ii. p. 9, ed. 3, ann. 1754.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 22 :*

ST ALBAN, protomartyr of Britain : ST JOHN FISHER, Cardinal, martyr : and ST PAULINUS OF NOLA, Bishop, who developed a taste for retirement from the conversation of St Ambrose of Milan, St Martin and St Delphinus.

<sup>1</sup> See *Analecta Henschenii de S. Albano* ; and *Papebroke*, t. iv. Junij.

<sup>2</sup> *Funeral Monuments*, p. 555.

JUNE 23

## ST ETHELDREDA, OR AUDRY, VIRGIN, ABBESS

(A.D. 679)

[From her Life, by Bede, b. iv. ch. 19, 20; and more at large by Thomas, a monk of Ely, in his History of Ely; in Wharton, *Anglia Sacra*, p. 597; and Papebroke's Notes, p. 489, t. iv. Junij; see also Bradshaw's life of St Wærburga, ch. 18; Bentham, *Hist. Ely*, ed. 1766.]

ST ETHELDREDA, or EDILTRUDIS, commonly called Audry, was third daughter of Annas, or Anna, the holy king of the East Angles and St Hereswyda. She was younger sister to St Sexburga and to St Ethelburga, who died a virgin and nun in France, and was eldest sister to St Withburga. She was born at Ermynge, a famous village in Suffolk, and brought up in the fear of God. In compliance with the desire of her friends she married Tonbercht, prince of the Southern Girvij; but they lived together in perpetual continency. Three years after her marriage, and one year after the death of her father, Audry lost her husband, who for her dowry settled upon her the Isle of Ely. The holy virgin and widow retired into that solitude and there lived five years, rather like an inhabitant of heaven than one in a mortal state. Trampling under her feet whatever attracts the hearts of deluded worldlings, she made poverty and humility her delight and her glory, and to sing the divine praises with the angels night and day was her most noble ambition and holy employ. Notwithstanding her endeavours to hide herself from the world, her virtues pierced the veil which she studied to throw over them, and shone with a brightness which was redoubled from the lustre which her humility reflected on them. Egfrid, the powerful King of Northumberland, hearing the fame of her virtues, by the most earnest suit extorted her consent to marry him, and she was obliged to engage a second time in that state. The tradition of the church, which by her approbation and canons has authorized this conduct in many saints, is a faithful voucher that a contract of marriage, not yet consummated, deprives not either party of the liberty of preferring the state of greater perfection. St Audry, upon this principle, during twelve years that she reigned with her husband, lived with him as if she had been his sister, not as his wife, and devoted her time to the exercises of devotion and charity. At length, having taken the advice of St Wilfrid and received from his hands the religious veil, she withdrew to the monastery of Coldingham, beyond Berwick, and there lived in holy obedience under the devout abbess St Ebba. Afterwards, in the year 672 according to Thomas of Ely, she returned to the Isle of Ely and there founded a double monastery upon her own estate. The nunnery she governed herself, and was by her example a living rule of perfection to her sisters. She ate only once a day, except on great festivals or in time

of sickness; never wore any linen, but only woollen clothes; never returned to bed after matins, which were sung at midnight, but continued her prayers in the church till morning. She rejoiced in pains and humiliations, and in her last sickness thanked God for being afflicted with a painful red swelling in her neck, which she regarded as a just chastisement for her vanity—when in her youth at court she wore rich necklaces studded with brilliants. After a lingering illness, she breathed out her pure soul in profound sentiments of compunction on the 23rd of June 679. She was buried, according to her direction, in a wooden coffin. Her sister Sexburga, widow of Erconbercht, King of Kent, succeeded her in the government of her monastery, and caused her body to be taken up, put into a stone coffin, and translated into the church, on which occasion it was found uncorrupt; and the same physician who had made a ghastly incision in her neck a little before her death was surprised to see the wound then perfectly healed. Bede testifies that many miracles were wrought by the devout application of her relics and the linen cloths that were taken off her coffin: which is also confirmed by an old Latin hymn, by him inserted in his history.

This great queen and saint set so high a value on the virtue of virginity because she was instructed in the school of Christ how precious a jewel and how bright an ornament that virtue is in his divine eyes, who is the chaste Spouse and Lover of true virgins, who crown their chastity with a spirit of prayer, sincere humility, and charity. These souls are without spot before the throne of God; they are purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and the Lamb, being the inheritance properly consecrated to God; they sing a new canticle before the throne, which no others can sing, and they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.<sup>1</sup> “Whither do you think this Lamb goeth? where no other presumes, or is able to follow him,” cries out St Austin.<sup>2</sup> “Whither do we think that he goeth? into what groves or meadows? Where are found joys not like those of this world, false, empty, and treacherous; nor even such as are afforded in the kingdom of God itself to those that are not virgins; but joys distinct from theirs. The joys of the virgins of Christ are formed of Christ, in Christ, through Christ, and for Christ. The peculiar joys of the virgins of Christ are not the same as of those that are not virgins; for though others have their joys, none have such.” He adds:<sup>3</sup> “Be solicitous that you lose not this treasure, which if it be once forfeited, nothing can restore. The rest of the blessed will see you, who are not able themselves so far to follow the Lamb. They will see you, nor will they envy you; but by rejoicing for your happiness, they will possess in you what they do not enjoy in themselves. And that new song which they will not be able to say, they will yet hear, and will be delighted with

<sup>1</sup> Apoc. xiv.<sup>2</sup> Lib. de Sanctâ Virgin. c. 27, t. vi. p. 354.<sup>3</sup> Ibid., c. 29.

your so excellent a good. But you, who shall both say it and hear it, will exult more happily and reign more joyfully.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 23 :*

ST ETHELDREDA or AUDRY : ST MARY OF OIGNIES ; married early in life to a man remarkable for his piety, this young couple decided to serve the lepers in their own town of Nivelles in Brabant. They first gave all their possessions for the relief of the poor. St Mary of Oignies had the gift of spiritual knowledge and of counsel.

## JUNE 24

### THE NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

ST AUSTIN observes<sup>1</sup> that the church usually celebrates the festivals of saints on the day of their death, which is, in the true estimate of things, their great birthday—their birthday to eternal life. The same father adds that the Nativity of St John the Baptist is excepted from this rule. The reason of which distinction is, because this saint was sanctified in his mother's womb,<sup>2</sup> so that he was brought forth holy into the world; which St Bernard<sup>3</sup> and many eminent divines understand not only of an external sanctity or deputation to piety, but of the gift of sanctifying grace, by the remission of original sin, which they doubt not to have been imparted to him by the presence of our divine Redeemer in the visit made by the Blessed Virgin to St Elizabeth. Moreover, the birth of the precursor of our divine Saviour was a mystery which brought great joy to the world, announcing its redemption to be at hand; it was in itself miraculous, and was ushered in with many prodigies. God, who had often distinguished the birth of great prophets by signs and wonders, was pleased in an extraordinary manner to honour that of the Baptist, who both by the dignity of his office and by the eminent degree of grace and sanctity to which he was raised, surpassed, according to the oracle of truth itself, all the ancient patriarchs and prophets. His father Zachary was a holy priest of the family of Abia, one of the twenty-four sacerdotal families into which the children of Aaron were divided, in order that they might all serve in the temple by turns. Elizabeth, the wife of this virtuous priest, was also descended of the house of Aaron, though probably her mother was of the tribe of Juda, she being cousin to the Blessed Virgin. The Holy Ghost assures us that Zachary and Elizabeth were both just, by true virtue, not by an imperfect or false piety, which is scrupulous in some points only the better to cover certain favourite passions; which hypocrisy may often obtain the deceitful suffrage of men, but can never be pleasing in the divine eyes. The virtue of these saints was sincere and perfect: "And they walked in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame." So impenetrable are the foldings of the human

<sup>1</sup> Serm. 290.

<sup>2</sup> Luke i. 15, 41.

<sup>3</sup> St Bern. Ep. 174.



heart that we have reason to fear the disguise of some secret passions, even in our best actions. But blessed are they whom God commends.

Zachary lived probably at Hebron, a sacerdotal town in the western part of the tribe of Juda, in the hilly country about twenty miles from Jerusalem. David, when he appointed the services of the temple that was to be built, divided the priests into twenty-four courses, who were to officiate in the temple by turns, each a week at a time. Among these that of Abia was reckoned the eighth in the time of David.<sup>1</sup> It was usual for the priests of each family, or course, when it came to their turn, to choose by lot among themselves the men who were to perform the several parts of the service of that week. It fell to the lot of Zachary, in the turn of his ministration, to offer the daily morning and evening sacrifice of incense on the golden altar in the inner part of the temple, called the Sanctum or sanctuary; which sacrifice was prescribed as an emblem of the indispensable homage which all men are bound to pay to God of their hearts, by morning and evening prayer. It happened that while Zachary was offering the incense one day for this sacrifice and the people were praying without the sanctuary, he was favoured with a vision, the angel Gabriel appearing to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. Zachary being struck with exceeding terror and amazement, the angel encouraged him, assuring him that his prayer was heard and that in consequence thereof his wife, though she was called barren, should conceive and bear him a son, adding, Thou shalt call his name John, and he shall be great before God. He did not call him great in the world, in honours, in riches, or applause—these false titles being mere emptiness and smoke, fraught with snares and secret poison. Nor did he say he would be great in the deceitful judgment and foolish opinion of men, who, not knowing things as they are in themselves, seldom weigh them in a just balance, and often give them names contrary to what they ought to bear, calling darkness light, and that which is bitter sweet: but he who is great before God is great indeed. Other saints are often particularly distinguished by certain characteristical privileges; but John eminently excelled in graces, and was a doctor, a virgin, and martyr. He was a prophet, and more than a prophet, it being his office to point out to the world Him whom the ancient prophets had foretold obscurely and at a distance. His spotless innocence, his unparalleled penance, his spirit of prayer and retirement, his zeal and charity, were wonderful; but the crown of his greatness was his profound humility.

An early piety, and an innocence which was never defiled by any stain of sin, 'is a precious grace; and the first-fruits of a heart are particularly due to God, and a sacrifice most agreeable to him. Therefore the angel ordered that the child should be consecrated to God from his very birth, for

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 11.

an exterior mark of his holy destination; and for an emblem of the necessity of leading a mortified life in the practice of virtue, this heavenly messenger enjoined that he should never touch wine or any other intoxicating liquor. The angel added that he was holy, and filled with an extraordinary measure of grace by the Holy Ghost, even from the womb of his mother.

That the miracle of the Baptist's birth might be more evident, Elizabeth was at that time advanced in years, and, according to the course of nature, past child-bearing. God had so ordained it that this saint might be the fruit of long and earnest prayer, the ordinary channel of his graces. By this circumstance parents are admonished with what assiduity and fervour they ought to address themselves to God to obtain his blessing upon their offspring. Zachary was amazed at the apparition and at the wonderful things he heard, and begged a sign might be given him which might ascertain to him the effect of these great promises. The angel, to grant his request and at the same time to show he might have reasonably acquiesced in the marks given him in the vision itself, answered that from that moment he should continue dumb till such time as the child was born. On the following Sabbath-day the week of his ministration expired, after which he returned home. Elizabeth conceived, and in the sixth month of her pregnancy was honoured with a visit from the mother of God, in which, at the presence of the world's Redeemer, the Baptist was sanctified while yet in his mother's womb. On this occasion the blessed child, yet unborn, was by an extraordinary privilege favoured with the use of reason—was the first among men who beheld Christ, and knew him before he saw the light with his corporeal eyes. Inexpressible was the miraculous joy with which his soul was overwhelmed to behold Him present, whom the ancient prophets rejoiced so much only to foresee in spirit. Whence it is added that he leaped for joy in the womb. Elizabeth, after nine months, brought forth her son, who was circumcised on the eighth day. On that occasion the rest of the family were for having him called by his father's name, Zachary; but his mother, by divine inspiration, said his name should be John. The father confirmed the same by writing, and, immediately recovering the use of his speech, broke out into the divine praises in the most profound sentiments of love and thanksgiving, and joyfully proclaimed the infinite mercy with which God in his most tender bowels was pleased to visit his people of Israel and the nations which were seated in the shades of death. To teach us with what watchfulness and care we are bound to preserve the treasure of divine grace and earnestly labour continually to improve it by a humble and penitential life, by assiduous prayer, by an application to the practice of all good works and a scrupulous flight of dangerous occasions, the Baptist was inspired by the Holy Ghost to retire in his tender years into the wilderness. There he devoted himself to the exercises of holy prayer, leading a most austere

penitential life. His garment was of a rough camel's hair, girt about him with a leathern girdle, and he allowed himself no other food than what he found in the desert, wild honey and locusts. These are a kind of large grasshoppers, and are used in those countries as a coarse food when dressed, but St John ate them raw. Of this his retirement Origen writes:<sup>1</sup> "He went into the desert, where the air was more pure, the heavens more open, and God more familiar, that till the time of his preaching was come he might employ himself in prayer in the company of angels." And again,<sup>2</sup> "He had neither scrip nor servant, nor so much as a poor cottage to shelter himself in from the inclemency of the weather. He remained in the desert even when he began to preach penance." St Jerom writes,<sup>3</sup> "Neither the tenderness nor the riches of his devout parents could hold him in their plentiful house amidst dangers from the world. He lived in the desert and disdained to behold other things with eyes which coveted to see Christ.

St John by his retirement calls upon us to disengage our hearts from the ties of the world, and frequently to imitate in our closet his exercises in the wilderness. The world is like a perspective which can only be seen in the true point of light at a distance. By holy retirement and by conversing often with heaven, the fascination of its enchantments will fall from before our eyes, and we shall see that it has nothing which ought not to be to a Christian heart an object of contempt, abhorrence, or dread. It is made up of vanity, danger, and sin. Its goods and enjoyments are short-lived and uncertain, and in themselves false and empty; its pains real and grievous; and its promises treachery and deceit. It is now so worn out, and its cheats are so clearly discovered by long experience, according to the observation of St Austin,<sup>4</sup> that it ought long ago to have lost its false painted charms. Gerson<sup>5</sup> compares those who seek for happiness in it to fools who should, with great pains, seek for roses and tulips on nettles and briars which, instead of yielding flowers, can only prick and wound their hands. It is covered with a thick darkness, which intercepts the sight of heavenly things; it is filled with snares in every part, and its vanities and pleasures are fraught with deadly poison. We must enter it with a holy fear, must converse in it with watchfulness, and continually fortify our souls against the infection of its air by the antidotes of frequent meditation, prayer, and self-denial, according to the excellent advice of St Francis of Sales.<sup>6</sup> Thus shall we learn to live in the world so as not to be of it, to use it as if we used it not, and possess it so as not to be possessed or captivated by it.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 24 :*

ST BARTHOLOMEW, a monk of the Abbey of Dunelm : THE NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST : THE MARTYRS OF ROME, under Nero, who was the avowed enemy of the Christian religion and the first Roman emperor to declare a bloody war against it. A general mention of all those martyred under his rule is made on this date. But the people of God increased in numbers and strength the more they were oppressed.

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Hom. xi. in Luc.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 45, ad Arment.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. xxv. ib.

<sup>5</sup> Serm. cont. Avar.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. ad Rustic.

<sup>6</sup> Lib. iv. Ep. 46.

JUNE 25

## ST PROSPER OF AQUITAIN, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 463)

[From his own and St Austin's writings. See Ceillier, t. xiv.; Tillemont, t. xvi.; Rives, *Hist. Littér.* t. ii. p. 369; also John Antony Salinas in *Opera SS. Prosper, Aquitani, et Honorati Massiliensis, Notis Illustrata*, Romæ, 1732; and Cacciari, *Exercit. in Op. S. Leonis M. Dissert. de Pelagian.* c. 3, p. 290.]

ST PROSPER is surnamed of Aquitain, to distinguish him from a bishop of Orleans and others of the same name. His birth is usually placed in the year 403. His works show that in his youth he had happily applied himself to the studies of grammar and all the branches both of polite and sacred learning. On account of the purity and sanctity of his manners, he is called by those of his age a holy and venerable man.<sup>1</sup> Having left Aquitain, his native country, he was settled in Provence, and probably at Marseilles, when St Austin's book on Correction and Grace was brought thither. Certain priests and others of that country had been offended at that father's writings against the Pelagians, pretending that the necessity of divine grace, which he established with the Catholic Church, destroyed free-will. They granted it to be clear from faith and holy Scriptures that no good action conducive to eternal life can be done without a co-operating supernatural succour or grace; but they thought it a necessary condition to free-will in man that the beginning or first desire of faith, or any other supernatural virtues and actions (which being grounded upon faith, lead to eternal life), should be the work of free-will, without the aid of grace; using the comparison of a sick man, who first desires a cure himself, by which desire he is moved to call in a physician. This error was called Semipelagianism, and in reality gave the glory of virtue to the creature in its first motion or desire, contrary to the doctrine of the apostle and of Christ himself. St Austin's book on Correction and Grace served only to make them louder in their complaints. Hilary, a holy, zealous, and learned layman, an acquaintance of St Austin, undertook the defence of his works, and of the faith of the church, and engaged St Prosper in the same cause. Our saint does not appear to have been any more than a layman; but his virtue, extraordinary talents, and learning rendered him a proper person to oppose the progress of heresy. By the advice of Hilary, he wrote to St Austin informing him of the errors of these priests of Marseilles, and that holy doctor compiled two books to confute and instruct them: the first, on the Predestination of the Saints; the second, on the Gift of Perseverance. Hilary had also wrote to him on the same subject. This happened in 428 and 429.

These two books were sufficient to convince the Semipelagians, but

<sup>1</sup> Victor apud Bucher. in *Cyclo Pasch.* p. 8.

did not convert their hearts. They, therefore, had recourse to calumny, and accused St Austin and his friends of teaching a necessitating grace which destroys free-will. One Rufinus, a friend of St Prosper, surprised at these reports, desired to be informed by him of the state of the question. The saint answered him by a letter yet extant, in which he explains the holy faith which they defended and the errors and slanders of their enemies. The Semipelagians declared that they would stand by the decisions of the Pope. Prosper and Hilary, out of a motive of zeal, went as far as Rome; and Pope Celestine, upon their information, wrote a dogmatical letter to the Bishop of Marseilles and other neighbouring prelates against those enemies of grace, in which he highly commends the doctrine of St Austin. This happened after the death of that holy doctor in 431. The troubles were not yet appeased, and our saint saw himself under a necessity of entering the lists with his pen. His poem on the Ungrateful seems to have appeared about the year 431. By that name he meant the Semipelagians, who were ungrateful to the divine grace, though they were not then cut off from the communion of the church. This work, the masterpiece of our saint, is written in most elegant verse. He says in it that the see of St Peter, fixed at Rome, presides over the whole world, possessing by religion what it had never subdued by arms. He most beautifully demonstrates the necessity of grace, especially for divine love. He has left us several other lesser works.

St Leo the Great being chosen pope in 440, invited St Prosper to Rome, made him his secretary, and employed him in the most important affairs of the church. Our saint crushed the Pelagian heresy, which began again to raise its head in that capital. Photius ascribes its final overthrow to the zeal, learning, and unwearied endeavours of St Prosper.<sup>1</sup> Marcellinus, in his chronicle, speaks of him as still living in 463. His name occurs in the Roman martyrology on this day. A complete edition of his works was procured at Paris by M. Maugeant, in folio, in 1711, with his life, translated from the Memoirs of Tillemont. F. John Salinas, a canon regular of the congregation of St John of Lateran, has published in Rome, in 1732, a new correct edition of the works of St Prosper and of St Honoratus of Marseilles, in 8vo. Dr Peter Francis Foggini having published at Rome, in 1754, the treatises of St Austin on Grace in two small volumes (reprinted at Paris in 1757), to complete this collection, in a third volume are added the works of St Prosper under this title: *S. Prosperi Aquitani, S. Leonis M. Notarii de Gratia Dei, Opera Omnia. Editionem Variis Lectionibus, Præcipuè e Cod. MSS. Vaticanis, Adronatam, Curavit P. F. F. Romæ, 1758, in 8vo.* Le Maître de Sacy has given us St Prosper's Poem on the Ungrateful, in French verse.

Without the succour of divine grace we can do nothing; \* we cannot

<sup>1</sup> Photius, Cod. 54.

\* John xv. 5.

so much as form one good thought conducive to eternal life, nor take the least step towards God by supernatural virtue. "As the eye of the body, though perfectly sound, cannot see unless it be assisted by the light, so neither can a man live well but by the eternal light which is derived from God," as St Austin says.<sup>1</sup> God, who desires that all men be saved, offers this treasure to everyone, enlightening every man that cometh into this world.<sup>2</sup> The graces which we reject are seeds which would fructify to a hundredfold; they are talents which, if put out to the banker, would be multiplied; faithfully corresponded with, they would make us saints; but the abuse of them will be our greatest crime and our heaviest condemnation.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 25 :*

ST ADELBERT, a prince of Northumberland who left the world and joined St Willibrord in his apostolate in Lower Germany about 700 : ST AGOARD and ST AGLIBERT, in the diocese of Paris, martyred for having pulled down one of the heathen temples : THE BLESSED SISTERS OF CHARITY OF ARRAS, martyrs : ST LUAN, Abbot of Bangor in Ireland : ST MAXIMUS, Bishop of Turin, one of the lights of the fifth century : ST MOLOC, Bishop, a Scotsman and a zealous assistant of St Boniface of Ross : ST PROSPER OF AQUITAIN : and ST WILLIAM OF MONTE VERGINE, founder of the religious congregation of that name, later put under the rule of St Benedict.

## JUNE 26

### ST JOHN AND ST PAUL, MARTYRS

THEY were both officers in the army under Julian the Apostate, and received the crown of martyrdom, probably in 362, under Apronianus, Prefect of Rome, a great enemy of the Christians. These saints glorified God by a double victory; they despised the honours of the world and triumphed over its threats and torments. They saw many wicked men prosper in their impiety, but were not dazzled by their example. They considered that worldly prosperity which attends impunity in sin is the most dreadful of all judgments; and how false and short-lived was this glittering prosperity of Julian, who in a moment fell into the pit which he himself had dug! But the martyrs, by the momentary labour of their conflict, purchased an immense weight of never-fading glory; their torments were, by their heroic patience and invincible virtue and fidelity, a spectacle worthy of God, who looked down upon them from the throne of his glory, and held his arm stretched out to strengthen them, and to put on their heads immortal crowns in the happy moment of their victory. An old church in Rome, near that of SS. Peter and Paul, bore the name of SS. John and Paul, as appears by the calendar published by F. Fronto. They have a proper office and mass in the sacramentaries of St Gelasius and St Gregory the Great; also in the ancient Gallican Liturgy. In England, the council of Oxford in 1222 ordered their festival to be kept of the third class; that is, with an obligation of hearing mass before work.

<sup>1</sup> S. Aug. Lib. de Nat. et. Grat. c. 26, t. x.

<sup>2</sup> John i.

How famous the names of SS. John and Paul have been in the church ever since the fifth century is set forth at large by Rondininus.

The saints always accounted that they had done nothing for Christ so long as they had not resisted to blood, and by pouring forth the last drop completed their sacrifice. Every action of our lives ought to spring from this fervent motive, and consecration of ourselves to the divine service with our whole strength; we must always bear in mind that we owe to God, by innumerable titles, all that we are; and after all we can do are unprofitable servants, and do only what we are bound to do. But how base is our sloth and ingratitude, who in every action fall so much short of this fervour and duty! How does the blood of the martyrs reproach our lukewarmness!

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 26 :*

ST ANTHELM, Bishop of Bellay, who rendered great service to the church in the schism of the anti-pope, Victor III : ST BABOLEN, a monk of the order of St Columban, first Abbot of St Peter's des-Fosses, which he made into a house of saints : ST JOHN and ST PAUL, martyrs : ST MAXENTIUS, Abbot in Poitou, christened Adjutor, who fled the praise of men as the bane of virtue : the Venerable RAINGARDA, widow, who is reputed a saint by the sacred biographers of Auvergne, but does not appear to have been publicly honoured among the saints : and ST VIGILIUS, Bishop of Trent in 385, to whom St Ambrose wrote a long letter exhorting him to oppose the practice of usury and the custom of Christians to intermarry with infidels.

JUNE 27

ST LADISLAS I, CONFESSOR, KING OF HUNGARY

(A.D. 1095)

[See Papebroke's Collections from the Hungarian historians, t. v. Junij, p. 315.]

LADISLAS THE FIRST, called by the Hungarians St Lalo, and in old French Lancelot, was son of Bela, King of Hungary, and born in 1041. By the pertinacious importunity of the people he was compelled, much against his own inclination, to ascend the throne in 1080, the kingdom being then elective. He restored the good laws and discipline which St Stephen had established and which seem to have been obliterated by the confusion of the times. Chastity, meekness, gravity, charity, and piety were, from his infancy, the distinguishing parts of his character; avarice and ambition were his sovereign aversion, so perfectly had the maxims of the gospel extinguished in him all propensity to those base passions. His life in the palace was most austere; he was frugal and abstemious, but most liberal to the church and poor. Vanity, pleasure, or idle amusements had no share in his actions or time, because all his moments were consecrated to the exercises of religion and the duties of his station, in which he had only the divine will in view, and sought only God's greater honour. He watched over a strict and impartial administration of justice, was generous and merciful to his enemies, and vigorous in the defence of his country

and the church. He added to his kingdom Dalmatia and Croatia, drove the Huns out of his territories, and vanquished the Poles, Russians, and Tartars. He was preparing to command, as general-in-chief, the great expedition of the Christians against the Saracens for the recovery of the Holy Land when God called him to himself on the 30th of July 1095. He was buried at Waradin, where his relics continue "still to be illustrated by miracles," says the Roman Martyrology, on the 27th of June, on which day, on account of their translation, it celebrates his festival. He was canonized by Celestine III in 1198.

How useless and impertinent are the scenes and amusements of the world, in which so many squander away that time which was given them to prepare for eternity! How insignificant and capricious are the lives of many who make here the greatest figure! The saints filled all their moments with good works and great actions; and whilst they laboured for an immortal crown, the greatest share of worldly happiness of which this life is capable fell in their way without being even looked for by them. In their afflictions themselves, virtue afforded them the most solid comfort, pointed out the remedy, and converted their tribulations into the greatest advantages.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 27 :*

ST JOHN, priest, surnamed of Moutier and of Chinon, a native of Great Britain, who led a retired life at Chinon and was buried there, his sanctity being attested by many miraculous cures : and ST LADISLAS, King of Hungary.

## JUNE 28

### ST IRENÆUS, MARTYR, BISHOP OF LYONS

(A.D. 202)

[See Tillemont, t. iii. ; Ceillier, t. ii. p. 135 ; Orsi, t. ii. ; F. Colonia, Hist. Littéraire de la Ville de Lyon, sæc. 3, p. 103 ; and Dom. Massuit, in his edition of this father's works.]

THIS saint is himself our voucher that he was born near the times of Domitian;<sup>1</sup> consequently not in the close, as Dupin conjectures, but in the beginning of Adrian's reign, about the year 120. He was a Grecian, probably a native of Lesser Asia. His parents, who were Christians, placed him under the care of the great St Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. It was in so holy a school that he learned that sacred science which rendered him afterward a great ornament of the church in the days of her splendour and the terror of her enemies. St Polycarp cultivated his rising genius and formed his mind to piety by precepts and example; and the zealous scholar was careful to reap all the advantages which were offered him by the happiness of such a master. Such was his veneration for his sanctity that he observed every action, and whatever he saw in that holy man, the better to copy his example and learn his spirit. He listened to his in-

<sup>1</sup> Lib. v. c. 30.



structions with an insatiable ardour, and so deeply did he engrave them in his heart that the impressions remained most lively even to his old age, as he declares in his letter to Florinus, quoted by Eusebius.<sup>1</sup> St Jerom informs us that St Irenæus was also a scholar of Papias, another disciple of the apostles. In order to confute the heresies of that age—which, in the first three centuries, were generally a confused medley drawn from the most extravagant systems of the heathens and their philosophers, joined with Christianity—this father studied diligently the mythology of the pagans and made himself acquainted with the most absurd conceits of their philosophers, by which means he was qualified to trace up every error to its sources and set it in its full light. On this account he is styled by Tertullian <sup>2</sup> “The most diligent searcher of all doctrines.” St Jerom often appeals to his authority. Eusebius commends his exactness. St Epiphanius calls him “A most learned and eloquent man, endowed with all the gifts of the Holy Ghost.” Theodoret styles him “The light of the western Gauls.”

St Gregory of Tours informs us that St Polycarp himself sent St Irenæus into Gaul, perhaps in company with some priest. He was himself ordained priest of the church of Lyons by St Pothinus; and in 177 he was sent deputy in the name of that church to Pope Eleutherius, to entreat him not to cut off from the communication of the Church the Orientals on account of their difference about the celebration of Easter, as Eusebius <sup>3</sup> and St Jerom <sup>4</sup> take notice. The multitude and zeal of the faithful at Lyons stirred up the rage of the heathens, and gave occasion to a tumultuary and most bloody persecution, of which an account has been given, June 2nd. St Irenæus gave great proofs of his zeal in those times of trial; but survived the storm, during the first part of which he had been absent in his journey to Rome. St Pothinus having glorified God by his happy death in the year 177, our saint, upon his return, was chosen the second Bishop of Lyons, in the heat of the persecution. By his preaching he, in a short time, converted almost that whole country to the faith, as St Gregory of Tours testifies. Eusebius tells that he governed the churches of Gaul; but the faith was not generally planted in the more remote provinces from Marseilles and Lyons before the arrival of St Dionysius and his companions in the following century.

Commodus succeeding his father Marcus Aurelius in the empire in 180, though an effeminate debauched prince, restored peace to the Church. But it was disturbed by an execrable spawn of heresies, particularly of the Gnostics and Valentinians. St Irenæus wrote chiefly against these last, his five books against heresies. The original Greek text of this work was most elegant, as St Jerom testifies. But, except some few Greek passages

<sup>1</sup> Lib. v. c. 20. See St Polycarp's life.

<sup>2</sup> Eus. lib. v. c. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. contra Valent. c. 5.

<sup>4</sup> St Hier. Catal. c. 29.

which have been preserved, only a Latin translation is extant, in which the style is embarrassed, diffusive, and unpolished. It seems to have been made in the lifetime of St Irenæus, and to be the same that was made use of by Tertullian, as Dom. Massuet shows.<sup>1</sup> This Valentinus was a good scholar and preached with applause, first in Egypt and afterward at Rome. We learn from Tertullian<sup>2</sup> that he fell by pride and jealousy, because another was preferred before him in an election to a bishopric in Egypt. He first broached his heresy in Cyprus, but afterward propagated it in Italy and Gaul. When Florinus, who had been his fellow-disciple under St Polycarp, and was afterward a priest of the Church of Rome, blasphemously affirmed that God is the author of sin, and was on that account deposed from the priesthood, St Irenæus wrote him a letter entitled, "On the Monarchy or Unity of God, and that God is not the author of sin," which is now lost. Eusebius quotes from it a passage in which the holy father, in the most tender manner, reminds him with what horror their common master, St Polycarp, had he been living, would have heard such impieties. Florinus was by this letter reclaimed from his error; but, being of a turbulent proud spirit, he soon after fell into the Valentinian heresy. On which occasion St Irenæus wrote his *Ogdoade*, or *Confutation of Valentinus's eight principal Æônes*, by whom that heresiarch pretended that the world was created and governed. In the end of this book, the saint added the following adjuration, preserved by Eusebius: "I conjure you who transcribe this book, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by his glorious coming to judge the living and the dead, that you diligently compare your copy, and correct it by the original." By this precaution we may judge of the extreme care of the fathers in this respect, and how great their abhorrence was of the imprudent practice of some heretics in adulterating writings. One Blastus, a priest at Rome, formed a schism by keeping Easter on the fourteenth day of the first moon, and to this schism added heresy, teaching this to be a divine precept.<sup>3</sup> He was deposed from the priesthood, and St Irenæus wrote against him his treatise on schism. The dispute about Easter being renewed, Pope Victor threatened to excommunicate the Asiatics; but was prevailed upon to tolerate for some time that practice of discipline by a letter of St Irenæus, who entreated and advised that, considering the circumstances, a difference of practice might be allowed, in like manner as the faithful did not all observe in the same manner the fast of Superposition, or of one or more days without taking any sustenance in holy week, but some kept it of one, others of two, others of more days.<sup>4</sup> Thus the pope's severity prevented these false teachers who pretended the legal ceremonies to be of precept from drawing any advantage from this practice of the Orientals; and the moderation of St Irenæus

<sup>1</sup> In *Op. S. Irenæi* Diss. 2, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> *Tert. Præscr.* c. 53; *Eus. Hist. lib. v. c. 25.*

<sup>3</sup> *Lib. contra Valent.* c. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Apud Eus. lib. v. c. 24.*

preserved some from a temptation of sinning by obstinacy and disobedience till a uniformity in that important point of discipline could be more easily established.

The peace which the church at that time enjoyed afforded our saint leisure to exert his zeal and employ his pen to great advantage. Commodus began his reign with extraordinary moderation; and though he afterwards sunk into debauchery and cruelty, yet he never persecuted the Christians. He was poisoned and strangled in 192, being thirty-one years old, of which he had reigned twelve. Pertinax, an old man, was made emperor by compulsion, but reigned only eighty-seven days, always trembling for his own safety. Being esteemed too frugal and rigorous, he was slain; and the prætorian guards, who had often made and unmade emperors at pleasure, whom the never-gainsaying senate confirmed, on that occasion debased to the last degree the dignity of the Roman empire by exposing it to sale by public auction. Didius Julianus and Sulpicianus, having several times outbid each other, when the latter had offered five thousand drachms, Julianus at once rose to six thousand two hundred and fifty drachms, which he promised to give every soldier; for which price he carried the empire. The senate confirmed the election; but the purchaser being embarrassed to find money to acquit himself of his engagement, was murdered sixty-six days after, having dearly bought the honour of wearing the purple and of having his name placed among the emperors. Severus was next advanced to the throne by a part of the troops, and acknowledged emperor by the senate. Niger and Albinus were proclaimed by different armies; but Severus defeated the first by his generals in 194, and the latter himself, near Lyons, in Gaul, in 197. The Christians had no share in these public broils. Tertullian at that time much extols the fidelity of the Christians to their princes, and says none of them were ever found in armies of rebels and, particularly, that none of them were ever engaged in the party either of Niger or of Albinus. It is evident from the whole series of the history of the Roman emperors that the people, from the days of Augustus, never looked upon that dignity as strictly hereditary. The confirmation of the senate, in the name of the whole Roman people, seems to have been regarded as the solemn act of state by which an emperor was legally invested with that supreme dignity; on this account the Christians everywhere acknowledged, and faithfully obeyed, Severus. He had also other obligations to them. Tertullian tells us<sup>1</sup> that a Christian called Proculus cured him of a certain distemper, for which benefit the emperor was for some time favourable to the Christians, and kept Proculus as long as he lived in his palace. This Proculus was the steward of Euhodus, who was a freed man of the Emperor Severus, and by him appointed to educate his son Caracalla. Tertullian mentions this

<sup>1</sup> Lib. de Scapul. c. 4.

cure as miraculous, and joins it to the history of devils cast out. This cure is confirmed by pagan writers.<sup>1</sup> Yet the clamours of the heathens at length moved this ungrateful emperor, who was naturally inclined to severity, to raise the fifth persecution against the church; for he was haughty, cruel, stubborn, and unrelenting. He published his bloody edicts against the Christians about the tenth year of his reign, of Christ 202. Having formerly been governor of Lyons and eye-witness to the flourishing state of that church, he seems to have given particular instructions that the Christians there should be proceeded against with extraordinary severity, unless this persecution was owing to the fury of the particular magistrates and of the mob. For the general massacre of the Christians at Lyons seems to have been attended with a popular commotion of the whole country against them whilst the pagans were celebrating the decennial games in honour of Severus. It seems to have been stirred up because the Christians refused to join the idolaters in their sacrifices. Whence Tertullian says in his Apology, "Is it thus that your public rejoicings are consecrated by public infamy?" Ado, in his chronicle, says that St Irenæus suffered martyrdom with an exceeding great multitude. An ancient epitaph, in leonine verses, inscribed on a curious mosaic pavement in the great church of St Irenæus, at Lyons, says the martyrs who died with him amounted to the number of nineteen thousand. St Gregory of Tours writes that St Irenæus had in a very short time converted to the faith almost the whole city of Lyons; and that with him were butchered almost all the Christians of that populous town; insomuch that the streets ran with streams of blood. Most place the martyrdom of these saints in 202, the beginning of the persecution; though some defer it to the year 208, when Severus passed through Lyons in his expedition into Britain. The precious remains of St Irenæus were buried by his priest Zachary between the bodies of the holy martyrs SS. Epipodius and Alexander. They were kept with honour in the subterraneous chapel in the church of St John till, in 1562, they were scattered by the Calvinists and a great part thrown into the river. The head they kicked about in the streets, then cast it into a little brook; but it was found by a Catholic and restored to St John's church.<sup>2</sup> The Greeks honour his memory on the 23rd of August; the Latins on the 28th of June. The former say he was beheaded.

It was not for want of strength or courage that the primitive Christians sat still and suffered the most grievous torments, insults, and death; but from a principle of religion, which taught them the interest of faith does not exempt men from the duty which they owe to the civil authority of

<sup>1</sup> See Tillem. Hist. des Emp. t. iii. p. 89; Hist. Eccl. t. iii. p. 111; and Fabricius, Bibl. Gr. viii. p. 460.

<sup>2</sup> Gallia Christ. nova, t. iv. p. 12.

government, and they rather chose to be killed than to sin against God, as Tertullian often takes notice. Writing at this very time, he tells the pagans that the Maurs, Marcomans, and Parthians were not so numerous as the Christians, who knew no other bounds than the limits of the world. "We are but of yesterday," says he,<sup>1</sup> "and by to-day we are grown up and overspread your empire; your cities, your islands, your forts, towns, assemblies, and your very camps, wards, companies, palace, senate, forum, all swarm with Christians. Your temples are the only places which you can find without Christians. What war are not we equal to? And supposing us unequal in strength, yet, considering our usage, what should we not attempt—we, whom you see so ready to meet death in all its forms of cruelty? Were the numerous host of Christians but to retire from the empire, the loss of so many men of all ranks would leave a hideous gap, and the very evacuation would be abundant revenge. You would stand aghast at your desolation, and be struck dumb at the general silence and horror of nature, as if the whole world was departed." He writes that the Christians not only suffered with patience and joy every persecution and insult, but loved and prayed for their enemies, and by their prayers protected the state, and often delivered the persecutors from many dangers of soul and body, and from the incursions of their invisible enemies, the devils. He says, "When we come to the public service of God, we come, as it were, in a formidable body, to do violence to him and to storm heaven by prayer; and this violence is most grateful to God. When this holy army of supplicants is met, we all send up our prayers for the life of the emperors, for their ministers, for magistrates, for the good of the state, and for the peace of the empire."<sup>2</sup> And in another place: "To this Almighty Maker and Disposer of all things it is that we Christians offer up our prayers, with eyes lifted up to heaven; and, without a prompter, we pray with our hearts rather than with our tongues; and in all our prayers are ever mindful of all our emperors and kings, wheresoever we live, beseeching God for every one of them, that he would bless them with length of days and a quiet reign, a well-established family, a valiant army, a faithful senate, an honest people, and a peaceful world, with whatever else either prince or people can wish for. Thus, while we are stretching forth our hands to God, let your tormenting irons harrow our flesh, let your gibbets exalt us, or your fires consume our bodies, or your swords cut off our heads, or your beasts tread us to the earth. For a Christian, upon his knees to his God, is in a posture of defence against all the evils you can crowd upon him. Consider this, O you impartial judges, and go on with your justice; rack out the soul of a Christian, which is pouring out herself to God for the life of the emperor." He says, indeed, that there are some Christians who do not live up to their profession; but no

<sup>1</sup> Apolog. c. 37.<sup>2</sup> Apolog. c. 30.

Christian had then ever been guilty of rebellion; though even philosophers among the heathens were often stained with that and other crimes. Hippas was killed whilst he was engaged in arms against his country; whereas no Christian had ever recourse to arms or violence, even for the deliverance of his brethren, though under the most provoking and barbarous usage.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 28 :*

ST IRENÆUS, Bishop and martyr : ST JOHN SOUTHWORTH, English martyr : ST LEO II, Pope, a Sicilian eminent for his piety, " perfectly skilled in the Latin and Greek tongues, in church music, and in sacred and profane literature " : ST PLUTARCH, brother of ST HERACLAS, SERENUS, and HERACLIDAS, a catechumen, scholars of Origen ; also HERO and another SERENUS : HERAIS, a damsel, also a catechumen, all martyrs of Alexandria ; Herais being baptized by fire, being burnt alive according to Origen, who had among his disciples several illustrious ladies : ST POTOMIANA and ST BASILIDES, the former a slave and the latter one of her guards deputed to carry her to execution ; he protected her from the lewdness of the crowd. She promised him she would obtain of God his salvation after her death. Her mother, MARCELLA, was burned at the same time. Basilides having seen St Potomiana in a vision, soon after, refused to serve the gods. His head was cut off by an axe.

## JUNE 29

### ST PETER, PRINCE OF THE APOSTLES

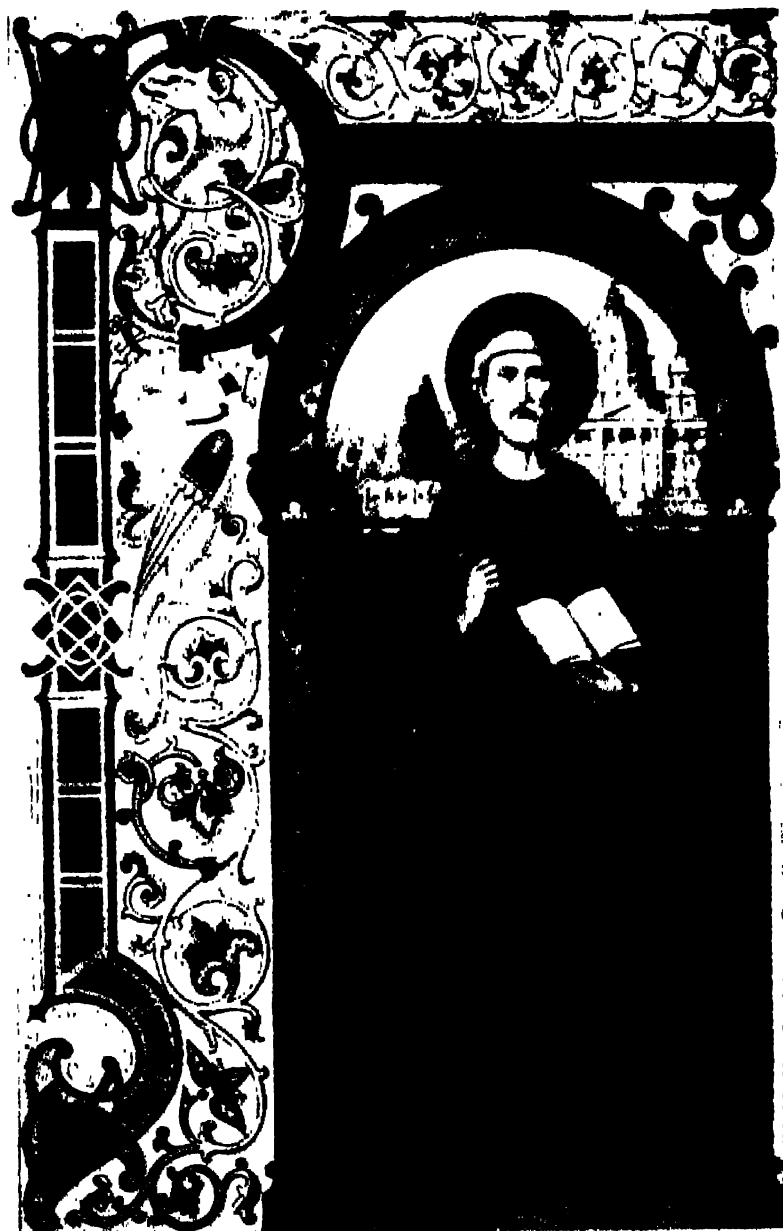
[From the Gospels, Acts, and ancient fathers. See Tillemont, Calmet, and Ceillier.]

ST PETER, the most glorious prince of the apostles, and the most ardent lover of his divine Master, before his vocation to the apostleship was called Simon. He was son of Jonas and brother of St Andrew. St Epiphanius<sup>1</sup> says that, though he was the younger brother, he was made by Christ the chief of all the apostles. St Chrysostom, on the contrary, takes him to have been the elder brother, and the oldest man in the apostolic college. If writers of the fifth age were divided upon this point, succeeding ages have not been able to decide it. St Peter originally resided at Bethsaida,<sup>2</sup> a town much enlarged and beautified by Herod the tetrarch, situated in the tribe of Nephtali, in Upper Galilee, on the banks of the lake or sea of Gennesareth. This town was honoured with the presence of our Lord, who in the course of his ministry preached and wrought miracles in it. Its inhabitants, however, were for the most part a stupid and obstinate set of men, and their abuse of the grace that was offered them deserved the dreadful woe which Christ denounced against them. St Peter and St Andrew were religious, docile, and humble in the midst of a perverse and worldly-minded people. They were educated in the laborious trade of fishing, which was probably their father's calling. From Bethsaida St Peter removed to Capharnaum,<sup>3</sup> probably on account of his marriage, for his wife's mother dwelt there. This place was equally commodious for fishing, being seated on the bank of the same lake, near the mouth of the river Jordan, on the confines of the tribes of Zabulon and Nephtali. Andrew

<sup>1</sup> Hier. 51, c. 17, p. 440.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 4. On Herod's enlarging Bethsaida, and giving it the name of Julias, see Josephus, *Works*, Geogr. of the N. Testament.

<sup>3</sup> Mark i. 29.



SAINT PETRUS

accompanied his brother thither, and they still followed their trade as before. With their worldly employment they retained a due sense of religion, and did not suffer the thoughts of temporal concerns or gain to devour their more necessary attention to spiritual things and the care of their souls. They lived in the earnest expectation of the Messiah. St Andrew became a disciple of St John the Baptist, and most are of opinion that St Peter was so too. The former, having heard St John call Christ the Lamb of God, repaired to our Lord, and continued with him the remainder of that day and, according to St Austin, the following night. By the conversation of Jesus he was abundantly convinced that he was the Christ, the world's Redeemer; and, coming from him, he went and sought out his brother Simon, and told him, in a transport of holy joy, that he had found the Messiah.<sup>1</sup> Simon believed in Christ before he saw him; and being impatient to behold him with his eyes and to hear the words of eternal life from his divine mouth, he without delay went with his brother to Jesus, who, looking upon him in order to give him a proof of his omniscience, told him not only his own but also his father's name. He on that occasion gave him the new name of Cephas, which in the Syro-Chaldaic tongue, then used in Judæa, signifies a rock, and is by us changed into Peter, from the Greek word of the same import. St Peter and St Andrew, after having passed some time in the company of our divine Redeemer, returned to their fishing trade, yet often resorted to him to hear his holy instructions. Towards the end of the same year, which was the first of Christ's preaching, Jesus saw Simon Peter and Andrew washing their nets on the banks of the lake, and going into Simon's boat to shun the press, he preached to the people who stood on the shore. After his discourse, as an earnest of his blessing to his entertainer, he bade Peter cast his nets into the sea. Our apostle had toiled all the foregoing night to no purpose, and had drawn his boat into the harbour, despairing of any success at present. However, in obedience to Christ, he again launched out into deep water and let down his net. He had scarce done this when such a shoal of fishes was caught by the first draught as filled not only their own boat, but also that of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were fishing near them and were forced to come and help them to drag in the net, which was ready to break with the load—yet the boats were not sunk. At the sight of this miracle, Peter, struck with amazement, fell on his knees, and cried out, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." The apostle by this humility, whilst he sincerely professed himself unworthy to appear in the presence of his Lord or to be in his company, deserved to receive the greatest graces. By this miracle Christ gave the apostles a type of their wonderful success in the new employment to which he called them when he made them

<sup>1</sup> John i. 42, St Aug. Hom. 7, in Joan. p. 27.



fishers of men. Upon this occasion he bade Peter and Andrew follow him. This invitation they instantly obeyed, and with such perfect dispositions of heart that St Peter could afterwards say to Christ with confidence, "Behold, O Lord, we have left all things, and have followed thee."<sup>1</sup> They were possessed of little, having only a boat and nets to leave; but they renounced all future hopes and prospects in the world with so perfect a disengagement of heart that they forsook with joy the whole world in spirit and affection; and, what went far beyond all this, they also renounced themselves and their own will. In requital, Christ promised them, besides never-ending happiness in the world to come, even in this life an hundredfold of true joys and spiritual blessings, in an uninterrupted peace of the soul, which surpasseth all understanding, in the overflowing sweetness of divine love, and in the abundant consolations of the Holy Ghost. From this time St Peter and St Andrew became constant attendants upon their divine Master. Jesus soon after this returned and made some stay at Capharnaum, cured Peter's mother-in-law of a fever, and after that miracle tarried some time in Galilee, healing many sick, casting out devils, and preaching in the synagogues on the sabbath-days with a dignity which bespoke his doctrine divine.

After the feast of the passover, in the year 31, Christ chose his twelve apostles, in which sacred college the chief place was from the beginning assigned to St Peter. Mr Laurence Clarke<sup>2</sup> takes notice that "in the enumeration of the twelve, all the evangelists constantly place Peter in the front. Our Lord usually directs his discourse to him, and he replies as the mouth of his fellows. Christ appeared to him after his resurrection before the rest of the apostles. He gave him a special command to feed his sheep. He was the first whom God chose to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. From these and other passages of the holy scripture, it is evident that St Peter acted as chief of the college of the apostles; and so he is constantly described by the primitive writers of the church, who call him the head, the president, the prolocutor, the chief, the foreman of the apostles, with several other titles of distinction." Christ, who had always distinguished St Peter above the rest of the apostles, promised to commit his whole church to his care above a year before his sacred death,<sup>3</sup> and confirmed to him that charge after his resurrection,<sup>4</sup> having exacted of him a testimony of his strong faith on the first occasion, and on the second a proof of his ardent love of God and zeal for souls. These two virtues are especially requisite in a pastor of souls; and the prince of the apostles was possessed of them in the most heroic and eminent degree. Enlightened by God, and passing over all visible and created things, he made the most glorious confession of his faith in Christ, as truly God and Son of the living

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix.<sup>2</sup> Life of Christ, on St Peter, p. 578.<sup>3</sup> Matt. xvi. 18. 19.<sup>4</sup> John xxi. 15. See Haanard, Church of Christ showed, t. i.

God. When certain weak disciples deserted Christ, being offended at his doctrine concerning the wonderful mystery of the blessed eucharist, our Saviour asked the twelve, "Will you also go away?" St Peter answered resolutely, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." As upon the testimony of his divine word, he readily assented to the most sublime mysteries; so, by the most sweet and tender love, he was desirous to keep continually in his holy company, and thought it was to perish ever to be separated from him. In a transport of this same love, he cried out when he beheld the transfiguration of our Saviour, "Lord, it is good for us always to be here; ever to be with thee; and to have our eyes fixed on the adorable object of thy glory." But this happiness was first to be purchased by labours and great sufferings. When he heard Christ foretell his barbarous death, this love moved him to persuade his Master to preserve himself from those sufferings he told them he was to undergo; for he did not then understand the advantages of the cross, nor the mystery of our redemption by it. For this he was called by Christ, Satan, or adversary; and that reprimand opened his eyes and was his cure. Out of love he twice cast himself into the sea to meet Jesus; for his heart melted at his sight and he had not patience to wait till the boat came up to the shore. This happened once after his resurrection, as we shall see in the sequel, but first long before, when the apostles were crossing the lake and Jesus came from the shore, walking on the waves to them. St Peter begged and obtained his leave to come on the waters to his divine Master. When he had stept upon the waves, a sudden fear something abated his confidence, and he began to sink: but Jesus held him up by the hand.<sup>1</sup> By his confidence in God we learn what we can do by the divine assistance; and by his fear what we are of ourselves; also, that no one receives from God the strength he stands in need of, but he who feels that of himself he is entirely without strength, according to the reflection of St Austin.<sup>2</sup> St Peter, influenced by the same strong love, offered himself to all sorts of difficulties and dangers, and to undergo death itself for his good Lord. Yet this zealous apostle, in punishment of a secret presumption, was permitted to fall, that we might learn with him more clearly to discover our own weakness and fear the danger of pride. St Peter had before given proofs of an exemplary humility. After the miraculous draught of fishes, he cast himself at our Lord's feet, begging he would depart from him, because he was a sinful man; and when our blessed Saviour offered to wash his feet at the last supper, he cried out in surprise and humility, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Thou shalt not wash my feet for ever." But being terrified by his threat that otherwise he should have no part with him, he with fervour offered also his hands and his head to be washed, if needful. In answer to which, Christ signified to him

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiv.<sup>2</sup> St Aug. Serm. 76.

that he who was clean from grievous sins stood in need only of wiping away smaller stains and imperfections, an emblem of which was this washing of the feet.

Who is not moved to tremble for himself, and to walk always in holy fear and in the most profound and sincere humility, when he sees so great an apostle, endowed with such eminent virtues, grace and spiritual gifts, fall at last by surprise into secret presumption, and by it into the grievous crime of denying his divine Master? His protestation that he was ready to die with him was accompanied with some degree of confidence in his own courage and in the strength of his resolution; whereas an entire and perfect distrust in ourselves is an essential part of true humility. Instead of praying in the humble sentiment of his own weakness and frailty, he relied on his courage as if it was proof against all dangers. To curb this rising presumption, Christ foretold him that before the crowing of the cock and break of day, he would thrice deny him. Jesus still ranked St Peter among his favourite apostles; and as he had made him, St James, and St John witnesses of his transfiguration, and of other extraordinary mysteries, so in the garden of Gethsemane he took these three with him, when he retired from the rest, and at a distance of a stone's throw from these three disciples fell into his agony and bloody sweat. Notwithstanding the courage of our fervent apostle, Christ was obliged to reproach him, with his two companions, that he was not able to watch with him one hour; when he ought to have been arming and strengthening himself by humble prayer against the assaults of the enemy. When Judas led the Jews to apprehend Christ, St Peter's zeal for his Master made him draw his sword against his unjust persecutors and smite Malchus, one of the busiest among them. But Christ taught him that the arms of his disciples are patience and humility. St Peter, by his presumption and by having neglected to watch and pray, deserved to fall from his fervour into a state of lukewarmness. He followed Jesus still when he was in the hands of his enemies, but at a distance, as St Luke takes notice. He who just before thought of dying for his Master and drew his sword to defend him was become afraid of sharing in his disgrace. Bad company soon completed the misfortune of this apostle. He mingled with the servants of the high-priest and other enemies of Christ in the lower hall of Caiaphas's palace. Here, at the reproach of the portress that had let him in, and soon after a second time, at that of another maid, he renounced all knowledge of him. The cock then crowed; yet Peter took no notice. About an hour after another of the assistants said he was one of the disciples of Jesus, which others confirmed, because his accent betrayed him to be a Galilæan; and a cousin of Malchus, whose ear had been cut off, assured that he had seen him in the garden. Hereupon Peter protested a third time, with oaths and curses, that he knew not the man. Thus one sin, if it be not

blotted out by speedy repentance, draws a soul, as it were by its own weight, into greater precipices.

How grievous soever this sin of St Peter was, he never lost his faith in Christ, as appears from Christ's words to him,<sup>1</sup> and as the fathers observe.<sup>2</sup> For "though he had a lie in his mouth, his heart was faithful," as St Austin says;<sup>3</sup> his sin, nevertheless, was most heinous, but his repentance was speedy, perfect, and constant; and it bore a proportion to the heinousness of his crime. At the time of his third denial, the cock crowed the second time; yet this exterior sign did not suffice alone to make the sinner enter into himself; but Jesus, turning, looked on him, not so much with his corporeal eyes, as visiting his soul with his interior grace, says St Austin;<sup>4</sup> and this it was that wrought in him the wonderful change, by which in a moment he became a perfect penitent. "Look on us, O Lord Jesus, that we may bewail our sins and wash away our guilt," cries out St Ambrose.<sup>5</sup> Our Blessed Redeemer has cast this gracious eye of his mercy on all the sinners whom he ever drew to repentance; his goodness disdains none. We therefore ought to cast ourselves at his feet, and though most undeserving of such a favour, most earnestly to beg that he afford us this gracious look, upon which our eternal salvation depends. This apostle set no bounds to his sorrow; and his cheeks are said to have been always furrowed with the streams of tears which he often shed to the end of his life. And as he fell by presumption, he ever after made the most profound humility the favourite and distinguishing part of his virtue, as St Chrysostom remarks.<sup>6</sup> From his example we must be apprised that if we confide in our own strength we are vanquished without fighting. This great model of pastors learned by his fall to treat sinners with tenderness and compassion; and Christ, by the graces and dignity to which he exalted him after his fall, shows his boundless mercy and how perfectly true repentance blots out sin.

After the resurrection of our divine Saviour, Mary Magdalen and the other devout women that went early on the Sunday morning to the sepulchre were ordered by an angel to go and inform Peter and the rest that Christ was risen. Our apostle no sooner heard this but he ran in haste with St John to the sepulchre. Love gave wings to both these disciples; but St John, running faster, arrived first at the place, though he waited there, doubtless out of respect; and St Peter first entered the sepulchre and saw the place where the sacred body had been laid. After their departure Christ appeared to Mary Magdalen; and afterward on the same day to St Peter, the first among the apostles.<sup>7</sup> This favour was an effect of his tender mercy, in which he would not defer to satisfy this apostle's extreme desire of seeing him, and to afford him comfort in the

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> St Ambr. lib. x. in Luc. S. Chrys. Hom. 39, ol. 38, in Matt. St Hilary in Matt. St Leo, Serm. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. contra Mendac. c. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Lib. i. de Gr. Chr. et Pecc. Orig. c. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Lib. x. in Luc. n. 89.

<sup>6</sup> Hom. 83, ol. 82, in Matt.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. xv. Luke xxiv.

grief of his bitter compunction, by this pledge of his grace and this assurance of his pardon.<sup>1</sup> The angel that appeared to St Mary Magdalen had ordered that the apostles should go from Jerusalem into Galilee, where they should see their divine Master, as he had foretold them before his sacred death. Accordingly, some days after, St Peter, whilst he was fishing in the lake of Tiberias, saw Christ on the shore; and not being able to contain himself in the transport of his love and joy, he threw himself into the water and swam to land, the sooner to meet his Lord. St John and the rest followed him in the boat, dragging the net loaded with one hundred and fifty-three great fishes, which they had taken by casting on the right side of the boat, by Christ's direction. When they were landed they saw upon the shore some live coals and a fish broiling upon them, with bread lying near it. This repast Jesus had prepared for them. After it was over, he thrice asked St Peter whether he loved him more than the rest of his disciples: St Peter told him, that He knew his love to be most sincere; and he was troubled in mind at the repetition of his question, fearing lest Christ discerned in his heart some secret imperfection or defect in his love. "Do not you see," says St Chrysostom,<sup>2</sup> "that the better he is grown the more modest and timorous he is become? He does not speak arrogantly, or contradict; he is not self-confident; therefore is he disturbed." By this triple public testimony of his love he was to repair the scandal of his former denial. "Let him confess by love who had thrice denied through fear," says St Austin.<sup>3</sup> By the ardour of his zeal and love was he to be qualified for the commission which he received hereupon to feed Christ's sheep and lambs, that is, his whole flock; for he who enters the sanctuary under the least partial influence of any other motive than that of love is a base hireling and a slave of avarice and vainglory; not a pastor of souls or minister of Christ. St Peter's greater love for Christ, and zeal for the interest of his glory, raised him to the high charge with which he was entrusted by his Divine Master. Upon this passage, St Chrysostom writes as followeth, "Why does Christ, passing by the rest, now speak to Peter alone?" He was eminent above the rest, the mouth of the disciples, and the head of that college. Therefore Paul came to see him above the rest. Christ says to him: If thou lovest me, take upon thee the government or charge of thy brethren. And now give the proof of that fervent love which thou hast always professed and in which thou didst exult. Give for my sheep that life which thou professedst thyself ready to lay down for me." Jesus after this foretold St Peter his martyrdom by the cross; and this apostle was well pleased to drink the bitter cup and to make his confession as public as his denial had been, that he might make some reparation for his former sin. His singular affection for St John prompted

<sup>1</sup> St Chrys. Hom. 38, in 1 Cor.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Hom. 88, ol. 87, in Joan. t. viii. p. 526, ed. Ben.

<sup>3</sup> In Joan. hic.

him to ask what would become of him, and whether he should not bear him company; but his Master checked his inquisitive curiosity.

Christ appeared to the apostles, assembled together on a certain mountain in Galilee,<sup>1</sup> where he had appointed to meet them, and gave them a commission to preach the gospel throughout all nations, promising to remain with his Church all days to the end of the world. He manifested himself also to five hundred disciples at once.<sup>2</sup> When the apostles had spent some time in Galilee, they returned to Jerusalem, where, ten days before the feast of Pentecost, Christ favoured them with his last appearance and commanded them to preach baptism and penance, and to confirm their doctrine by miracles.<sup>3</sup> Faith being essentially dark, mysterious, and supernatural, and the dispensations of providence and of the divine grace and mercy being above the reach of human reason, the great and necessary knowledge of these most important saving truths can only be conveyed to men by the divine revelation. This in the new law of the gospel was immediately communicated to the apostles, with a charge that they should promulge and propagate it in all nations of the earth. Poor illiterate men, destitute of every human succour, were made the instruments of this great work; and at their head was placed an ignorant fisherman, whose knowledge, when he was called to the apostleship, did not reach beyond his nets and boat. Yet this little troop triumphed over the wisdom of philosophers, the eloquence of orators, the authority of the greatest princes, the force of customs, policy, interest, superstition, and all the passions of men; over the artifices and persecutions of the whole world confederated against them. So powerful was the Spirit of God which enlightened their understandings and spoke by their mouths; such was the evidence of their testimony, confirmed by innumerable incontestable miracles, and by the heavenly temper and sanctity which their words and actions breathed; and lastly, sealed by their blood.

The extraordinary gifts and graces by which the apostles were qualified for this great function were the fruit of the descent of the Holy Ghost, who shed his beams upon them on Whitsunday. After the ascension of Christ, they waited the coming of that Divine Spirit in retirement and prayer. In the meantime, St Peter proposed to the assembly the election of a new apostle, whereupon St Matthias was chosen. The prince of the apostles, having received the Holy Ghost, made a sermon to the Jews, who were assembled about the disciples upon the fame of this prodigy, and he converted three thousand by the mildness and powerful unction of his words. We have great reason to admire the change which the grace of the Holy Ghost wrought in St Peter, both in the intrepidity and courage which he showed, and still more in his humility, patience, and meekness. He appeared always so ready to yield to everyone, and to humble himself

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxviii.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Mark xvi. 15. Luke xxiv. 44.

before all the world, that he seemed to forget the rank which he held in the Church, only when God's honour called upon him to exert his authority; and the natural warmth and vehemence of his temper was no more to be discerned in his actions, only in the fervour and constancy with which he underwent all manner of labours and dangers for the cause of God and his Church. The new converts received with the faith a share of the same Spirit. They persevered in the participation of the holy mysteries and in prayer, and, selling all their possessions, gave the price to the apostles to be distributed among the poor brethren. Their humility, simplicity of heart, meekness, patience, and joy in suffering were such that they seemed on a sudden to be transformed into angels, to use the expression of St Chrysostom,<sup>1</sup> so perfectly were they disengaged from the earth. The abundant effusion of the Holy Ghost, the advantage of persecutions, and the inflamed words and example of the apostles, effected this change in their hearts by the power of the right hand of the Most High.

The preaching of the apostles received a sanction from a wonderful miracle, by which St Peter and St John raised the admiration of the people. These two apostles, going to the temple at three o'clock in the afternoon, which was one of the hours for public prayer among the Jews, they saw a man who was lame from his birth and was begging alms at the gate of the temple which was called The Beautiful; and being moved with compassion, St Peter commanded him, in the name of Jesus Christ, to arise and walk. These words were no sooner spoken but the cripple found himself perfectly whole, and St Peter lifting him up, he entered into the temple walking, leaping, and praising God. After this miracle St Peter made a second sermon to the people, the effect of which was the conversion of five thousand persons. Upon this the priests and Sadducees, moved with envy and jealousy, prevailed upon the captain of the guard of the temple to come up with a troop of soldiers under his command and seize the two apostles and put them into prison, upon pretence of a sedition. Next morning they were summoned before the great court of the Sanhedrim, in which Annas, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander appeared busiest in carrying on the prosecution against them. The point of the sedition was waived, because groundless; and St Peter boldly declared that it was in the name of Jesus, in which all men must be saved, that the cripple had been made sound. The judges not being able to contest or stifle the evidence of the miracle, contented themselves with giving the apostles a severe charge not to preach any more the name of Jesus. But to their threats St Peter resolutely replied: "Whether it be just to obey you rather than God, be you yourselves judges." The two apostles, being discharged, returned to the other disciples, and after they had prayed together, the house was shaken, for a miraculous sign of the divine protection; and the whole company found

<sup>1</sup> Hom. 7, in Act.

themselves replenished with a new spirit of courage. The converts learned from the example of their teachers so perfect a spirit of disinterestedness, contempt of the world, and thirst after eternal goods that they lived in common, and the rich, selling their estates, laid the price at the feet of the apostles, that it might be equally distributed to such as had need. But neither miracles, nor the company and example of the saints, could extinguish the passion of avarice in the hearts of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. Being rich, they pretended to vie with the most charitable and sold their estate; but, whilst they hypocritically pretended to resign the whole price to the public use, they secretly retained a part to themselves. St Peter, to whom God had revealed their hypocrisy, reproached them singly that they had put a cheat upon their own souls by telling a lie to the Holy Ghost in the person of his ministers. At his severe reprimand, first the husband, and afterwards the wife, fell down dead at his feet.

The apostles confirmed their doctrine by many miracles, curing the sick and casting out devils. The people laid their sick on beds and couches in the streets, "that when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities." The high priest Caiaphas and the other heads of the Sanhedrim were much incensed to see their prohibition slighted and the gospel daily gain ground; and having apprehended the apostles, they put them into the common prison, but God sent his angel in the night, who, opening the doors of the prison, set them at liberty, and early the next morning they appeared again preaching publicly in the temple. The judges of the Sanhedrim again took them up and examined them. The apostles made no other defence but that they ought rather to obey God than men. The high priest and his faction deliberated by what means they might put them to death; but their sanguinary intentions were overruled by the mild counsel of Gamaliel, a famous doctor of the law, who advised them to wait the issue, and to consider whether this doctrine, confirmed by miracles, came not from God, against whom their power would be vain. However, they condemned the servants of God to be scourged. The apostles, after this torment, went away full of joy that they had been judged worthy to bear a part in the ignominy and sufferings of the cross, the true glory and advantages of which they had now learned. This, their spirit, says St Chrysostom,<sup>1</sup> was the greatest of their miracles. Many Jewish priests embraced the faith of Christ; but the daily triumphs of the word of God raised a persecution in Jerusalem which crowned St Stephen with martyrdom and dispersed the faithful, who fled, some to Damascus, others to Antioch, and many into Phœnicia, Cyprus, and other places. The apostles themselves remained still at Jerusalem to encourage the converts. The disciples preached the faith in all places whither they came; so that this

<sup>1</sup> Hom. 14, in Act.



dispersion, instead of extinguishing the holy fire, spread it the more on all sides. On this occasion St Philip the deacon converted many Samaritans, who were esteemed, though schismatics, to belong rather to the Jewish nation than to the Gentiles, and Christ himself had preached among them. St Peter and St John went from Jerusalem to Samaria to confirm the Samaritan converts, and St Peter had there his first conflict with Simon Magus. In the meantime, the persecution had ceased at Jerusalem after the conversion of St Paul. The favourable dispositions of the Emperor Tiberius might contribute to restore this calm. That prince was one of the worst of men, and so cruel a tyrant that Theodorus Gadareus, his preceptor, sometimes called him a lump of flesh steeped in blood. Yet from the account sent him by Pilate concerning the miracles and sanctity of Christ, he had entertained a high opinion of him, had some thoughts of enrolling him among the gods, and testified his inclinations in favour of the Christians, threatening even with death those who should accuse or molest them, as we are assured by Tertullian,<sup>1</sup> St Justin,<sup>2</sup> and others.

St Peter, who had stayed at Jerusalem during the heat of the persecution, after the storm was blown over made a progress through the adjacent country, to visit the faithful, as a general makes his round, says St Chrysostom,<sup>3</sup> to see if all things are everywhere in good order. At Lydda, in the tribe of Ephraim, he cured a man named Æneas, who had kept his bed eight years, being sick of a palsy; and at Joppe, being moved by the tears of the poor, he raised to life the virtuous and charitable widow Tabitha. The apostle lodged some time in that town, at the house of Simon the Tanner; which he left by the order of an angel to go to baptize Cornelius the centurion, a Gentile. Upon that occasion God manifested to the prince of the apostles, both by this order and by a distinct vision, the great mystery of the vocation of the Gentiles to the faith. It seems to have been after this that the apostles dispersed themselves into other countries to preach the gospel, beginning in the adjoining provinces. In the partition of nations which they made among themselves, St Peter was destined to carry the gospel to the capital city of the Roman empire and of the world, says St Leo. But the apostles stopped some time to preach in Syria and other countries near Judea before they proceeded further; and St Peter founded the church of Antioch, which was the metropolis not only of Syria but of all the East. St Jerom,<sup>4</sup> Eusebius,<sup>5</sup> and other ancient writers assure us that Antioch was his first see. It was fitting, says St Chrysostom, that the city which first gave to the faithful the name of Christians should have for its first pastor the prince of the apostles. Origen<sup>6</sup> and Eusebius<sup>7</sup> call St Ignatius the second Bishop of Antioch

<sup>1</sup> Apolog. c. 5, et 21.

<sup>2</sup> Apol. 1, ol. 2. On these acts of Pilate concerning Christ, see Universal History, vol. x. p. 625.

<sup>3</sup> Hom. 21, in Act.

<sup>4</sup> Hom. 6, in Luc.

<sup>5</sup> Catal. c. 1, et in Galat. c. xi.

<sup>6</sup> In Chron.

<sup>7</sup> Hist. lib. iii. c. 36

from St Peter. St Chrysostom says St Peter resided there a long time; the common opinion is, seven years, from the year thirty-three to forty. During this interval he made frequent excursions to carry the faith into other countries. For though several of the apostles chose particular sees for themselves among the churches which they founded, they did not so confine themselves as to forget their universal commission of preaching to all nations. St Peter was at Jerusalem in 37, when St Paul paid him a visit, and stayed with him fifteen days.<sup>1</sup> Our great apostle preached to the Jews dispersed throughout all the East, in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and the Lesser Asia, before he went to Rome, as Eusebius testifies. The same is confirmed by the inscription of his first epistle. He announced the faith also to the Gentiles, as occasions were offered, throughout these and other countries, as appears by many instances. St Peter is the only apostle whom the gospel mentions to have been married before his vocation to the apostleship; though we are assured by ancient fathers and historians that St Philip and some others were also married men when they were called by Christ.

Peter planted the faith in many countries near Judea before the dispersion of the apostles, which happened twelve years after the death of Christ, in the fortieth year of the vulgar Christian era. In the partition of nations among the apostles, St Peter chose Rome for the chief seat of his labours, and having preached through several provinces of the East, by a particular order of Divine providence he at length arrived there, that he might encounter the devil in that city, which was then the chief seat of superstition and the mistress of error. Divine providence, which had raised the Roman empire for the more easy propagation of the gospel in many countries, was pleased to fix the fortress of faith in that great metropolis, that it might be more easily diffused from the head into all parts of the universe. St Peter foresaw that by triumphing over the devil in the very seat of his tyranny he opened a way to the conquest of the rest of the world to Christ. It was in appearance a rash enterprise for an ignorant fisherman to undertake the conversion of the capital of the empire and the seat of all the sciences; to preach the contempt of honours, riches, and pleasures in that city, in which ambition, avarice, and voluptuousness had fixed their throne. The humility of Calvary suited not the pride of the Capitol. The ignominy of the cross was very contrary to the splendour of that pomp which dazzled the eyes of the masters of the world. Peter neither knows the humour, nor the genius, nor the policy, nor even the language of the people. Yet he enters alone this enemy's country, this fortress of impiety and superstition; and he preaches Jesus crucified to this great city. First, he announced this wonderful mystery to the Jews who lived there, whose apostle he was in the first place; then he addressed

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 19.

himself to the Gentiles, and he formed a Church composed of both. Eusebius,<sup>1</sup> St Jerom, and the old Roman Calendar, published by Bucherius, say that St Peter held the see of Rome twenty-five years; though he was often absent upon his apostolic functions in other countries. According to this chronology, many place his first arrival at Rome in the second year of the reign of Claudius, of Christ, 42; but all circumstances prove it to have been in the year 40, the twelfth after the death of Christ, in 39. Lactantius mentions only his last coming to Rome under Nero, a few years before his martyrdom.<sup>2</sup> If he stayed at Rome from the year 40 to 42, he returned speedily into the East, for in 44 he was thrown into prison at Jerusalem by king Agrippa;<sup>3</sup> and being miraculously delivered by an angel, he again left that city, and travelling through many countries in the East he established in them bishops, as St Agapetus assures us. He was at Rome soon after, but was banished from that city when, on account of the tumults which the Jews there raised against the Christians, as Suetonius relates, the emperor Claudius expelled them both in the year 49. But they were soon allowed to return. St Peter went again into the East, and in 51 was present in the general council held by the apostles at Jerusalem, in which he made a discourse to show that the obligation of the Jewish ceremonies was not to be laid on the Gentile converts. His determination was seconded by St James, Bishop of Jerusalem, and formed by the council into a decree. The same synod confirmed to St Paul, in a special manner, the apostleship of the Gentiles,<sup>4</sup> though he announced the faith also to the Jews when occasion served. St Peter, whilst he preached in Judea, chiefly laboured in converting the Jews. They being tenacious of the legal ceremonies, the use of them was for some time tolerated in the converts, provided they did not regard them as of precept; which being always condemned as an error in faith, was called the Nazarean heresy. After the council at Jerusalem, St Peter went to Antioch, where he ate promiscuously with the Gentile converts, without observing the Jewish distinction of unclean meats. But certain Jewish converts from Jerusalem coming in, he, fearing their scandal, withdrew from table, at which action the Gentile Christians took offence. To obviate the scandal of these latter, St Paul publicly rebuked his superior,<sup>5</sup> lest his behaviour might seem to condemn those who did not observe the Jewish ceremonial precepts, and lest they might apprehend some disagreement in the doctrine of the two apostles. St Peter, whilst he studied to avoid what might give offence to the weak Jewish converts, had not sufficiently attended to the scandal which the Gentile proselytes might take at his action. Nevertheless, St Austin justly observes that both these apostles give us on this occasion great lessons of virtue;<sup>6</sup> for we cannot sufficiently admire the just liberty

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. in Chron.

<sup>2</sup> Lactant. de Mort. Persec. See Baluze, Not. ib. and Ceillier, t. i.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xii.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xv. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. ii. 2.

<sup>6</sup> St Aug. Ep. 82.

which St Paul showed in his rebuke, nor the humble modesty of St Peter; "But," says that father, "St Peter sets us an example of a more wonderful and difficult virtue. For it is a much easier task for one to see what to reprehend in another, and to put him in mind of a fault, than for us publicly to acknowledge our own faults and to correct them. How heroic a virtue is it to be willing to be rebuked by another, by an inferior and in the sight of all the world?" "This example of Peter," says he in another place,<sup>2</sup> "is the most perfect pattern of virtue he could have set us, because by it he teaches us to preserve charity by humility." Everyone can correct others, but only a saint can receive well public rebuke. This is the true test of perfect humility and heroic virtue; this is something far more edifying and more glorious than the most convincing apologies.

St Peter wrote two canonical epistles. The first he dates from Babylon, by which, St Jerom and Eusebius tell us, he meant Rome, at that time the centre of idolatry and vice. The Jews usually called such cities by that figurative name; as they gave to a city infamous for debaucheries the name of Sodom, to an idolatrous country that of Egypt, to a race accursed by God that of Canaan. Rome is also called Babylon in the Apocalypse. This name might be frequently given it among the Christians of that age. This epistle seems to have been written between the years 45 and 55. It is chiefly addressed to the converted Jews, though the apostle also speaks to the Gentile converts, as St Austin observes. His principal view in it was to confirm them in faith under their sufferings and persecutions, and to confute the errors of Simon and of the Nicolaites. Erasmus, Estius, and all other judicious critics admire in the style a majesty and vigour worthy of the prince of the apostles, and a wonderful depth of sense couched in a few words. His second epistle was written from Rome a little before his death, and may be regarded as his spiritual testament. In it he strongly exhorts the faithful to labour earnestly in the great work of their sanctification, and cautions them to stand upon their guard against the snares of heresy. It is a tradition at Rome that St Peter converted the house of Pudens, a Roman senator, into a church which now bears the name of St Peter's, *ad vincula*. Many ancient Martyrologies mention a feast of "The dedication of the first church in Rome consecrated by St Peter." The Christians only seem to have built churches in Rome after the persecution of Severus; but had before oratories and chapels in such manner as the persecutions would allow; and the most sacred of these were afterwards converted into churches. St Paul mentions a Christian in Rome called Pudens,<sup>3</sup> whom some think to have been this senator. We cannot doubt but St Peter preached the gospel over all Italy, as Eusebius, Rufinus, and others assure us; and likewise in other provinces of the West, according to the commission which the apostles received to carry the gospel over the

<sup>1</sup> S. Aug. in Gal. ii. p. 949.<sup>2</sup> S. Aug. Serm. 350, ed. Ben.<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 21.

whole earth. Whence they did not confine themselves to single cities, except that St James fixed his residence at Jerusalem for the sake of the Jews. Our island among other places lays claim to the happiness of having been visited by St Peter, though this is only supported by modern vouchers, as may be seen in Alford, Usher, and Cressy. Lactantius<sup>1</sup> writes that the two great apostles, SS. Peter and Paul, foretold at Rome that God should in a little time send a prince against the Jews, who should overcome them, and level their metropolis with the ground: that during the siege of it, they should pine with hunger and thirst, even to the eating of one another: that after it should be taken, they should see their women grievously tormented before their eyes, their virgins deflowered, their young men torn asunder, their babes dashed to pieces, their country wasted with fire and sword; and the whole nation banished out of their own land, because they had exalted themselves above the most gracious and approved Son of God. St Athanasius<sup>2</sup> mentions that SS. Peter and Paul had often fled from persecutors in times of danger till, being assured of their martyrdom by a revelation, they courageously went to meet it. Our Saviour, immediately after his resurrection, had foretold St Peter in what manner he should glorify him in his old age, and that he should follow him even to the death of the cross.<sup>3</sup> He afterwards revealed to him the time of his death.<sup>4</sup> Several triumphs over the devil prepared him for that crown. To give a clear view of his last glorious conflict, it is necessary to introduce the history of that remarkable event by a short account of the last adventure of his celebrated antagonist. Simon Magus, after passing through divers provinces, came to Rome and there gained a high reputation. St Justin Martyr, St Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius, St Cyril of Jerusalem, and Theodoret assure us that divine honours were paid him there, and that a statue was erected to him in the isle of Tiber by the Emperor Claudius and the senate, with this inscription, "Simoni Deo Sancto." If Simon inclined the humour of Messalina that way, she was capable of being carried to all sorts of extravagances, and of persuading Claudius to the same; for that emperor is justly called a child with grey hairs, a greater idiot having never worn the purple. Messalina being slain for her public adulteries and other crimes in the year 48, Claudius took to wife his niece Agrippina, by an incest till then condemned in the Roman state. Being a greater firebrand than Messalina had ever been, she pushed Claudius on many acts of cruelty; for out of mere stupidity, and without malice, he could sport himself in blood. She prevailed on him to adopt Nero, who was her son by Domitius, her first husband. Claudius left a son of his own by Messalina, called Britannicus. Agrippina afterwards poisoned Claudius, in the year 51, and by a complication of crimes opened the way to the imperial throne

<sup>1</sup> Lib. iv. 22.<sup>2</sup> John xiii. 36; xxi. 18, 19.<sup>3</sup> Apol. pro Fugâ, p. 713.<sup>4</sup> 2 Pet. i. 14.

for her son Nero. The young prince soon set aside his mother, but governed five years with great clemency, leaving the direction of all things to his master Seneca, and to Burrhus, the prefect of the prætorian cohorts; except that he poisoned his brother Britannicus whilst they were supping together, in the year 55. But after he had killed his own mother Agrippina, in 58, he became the greatest monster of cruelty and vice that perhaps ever disgraced the human species. Simon Magus found means to ingratiate himself with this tyrant; for Nero was above all mortals infatuated with the superstitions of the black art to the last degree of folly and extravagance. To excel in this was one of his greatest passions; and for this purpose he spared no expense, and stuck at no crimes. But all his endeavours were fruitless. When Tiridates, a Parthian prince, who was a magician, came to Rome, and was crowned by Nero king of Armenia in the forum, the tyrant hoped to learn of him some important secrets of that detestable superstition. The most skilful of the Parthian magicians exhausted all their science to satisfy him; but only gave the world a new proof of the emptiness of that art. Pliny concludes from this want of success in Nero, and Tillemont repeats the same of Julian the Apostate, that seeing the utmost skill of those who have most addicted themselves to this deceitful art, joined with the greatest power and impiety, was never able to effect anything by it, everyone must rest convinced that magic is not less vain and idle than it is impious and execrable. Simon Magus, by his vain boastings and illusions, could not fail to please this tyrant. The fathers assure us that this famous magician had promised the emperor and people to fly in the air, carried by his angels, thus pretending to imitate the ascension of Christ. Accordingly he raised himself in the air by his magical power, in presence of the emperor. St Peter and St Paul, seeing the delusion, betook themselves to their prayers; upon which the impostor fell to the ground, was bruised, broke a leg, and died a few days after in rage and confusion. This wonderful event is related by St Justin, St Ambrose, St Cyril of Jerusalem, St Austin, St Philastrius, St Isidore of Pelusium, Theodoret, and others. Dion Chrysostomus, a heathen, writes that Nero kept a long time in his court a certain magician, who promised to fly.<sup>1</sup> And Suetonius says <sup>2</sup> that at the public games a man undertook to fly in the presence of Nero, but fell in his first essay, and his blood even stained the balcony in which the emperor stood. This history Baronius, Tillemont, Ceillier, and Orsi understand of Simon Magus.

The great progress which the faith made in Rome, by the miracles and preaching of the apostles, was the cause of the persecution which Nero raised against the Church, as Lactantius mentions. Other fathers say the resentment of the tyrant against the apostles was much inflamed by the misfortune of Simon Magus; and he was unreasonable enough to make

<sup>1</sup> Or. 21.<sup>2</sup> In Neron. c. 12.

this credible. But he had already begun to persecute the Christians from the time of the conflagration of the city, in 64. St Ambrose tells us<sup>1</sup> that the Christians entreated St Peter to withdraw for a while. The apostle, though unwillingly, yielded to their importunity and made his escape by night; but going out of the gate of the city, he met Jesus Christ, or what in a vision appeared in his form, and asked him, "Lord, whither art thou going?" Christ answered, "I am going to Rome, to be crucified again." St Peter readily understood this vision to be meant of himself, and taking it for a reproof of his cowardice and a token that it was the will of God that he should suffer, returned into the city and, being taken, was put into the Mamertine prison with St Paul. The two apostles are said to have remained there eight months, during which time they converted SS. Processus and Martinian, the captains of their guards, with forty-seven others. It is generally asserted that when they were condemned they were both scourged before they were put to death. If St Paul might have been exempted on account of his dignity of a Roman citizen, it is certain St Peter must have undergone that punishment which, according to the Roman laws, was always inflicted before crucifixion. It is an ancient tradition in Rome that they were both led together out of the city by the Ostian gate. St Prudentius says that they suffered both together in the same field, near a swampy ground, on the banks of the Tiber. Some say St Peter suffered on the same day of the month, but a year before St Paul. But Eusebius, St Epiphanius, and most others affirm that they suffered the same year, and on the 29th of June. St Peter, when he was come to the place of execution, requested of the officers that he might be crucified with his head downwards, alleging that he was not worthy to suffer in the same manner as his divine Master had died before him. He had preached the cross of Christ, had borne it in his heart and its marks in his body, by sufferings and mortification, and he had the happiness to end his life on the cross. His Lord was pleased not only that he should die for his love, but in the same manner himself had died for us, by expiring on the cross, which was the throne of his love. Only the apostle's humility made a difference, in desiring to be crucified with his head downward. His Master looked toward heaven, which by his death he opened to men; but he judged that a sinner formed from dust and going to return to dust ought rather in confusion to look on the earth as unworthy to raise his eyes to heaven. St Ambrose,<sup>2</sup> St Austin,<sup>3</sup> and St Prudentius ascribe this his petition partly to his humility and partly to his desire of suffering more for Christ. Seneca mentions that the Romans sometimes crucified men with their heads downward; and Eusebius<sup>4</sup> testifies that several martyrs were put to that cruel death. Accordingly the executioners easily granted the apostle his extraordinary request. St Chrysostom, St Austin, and St

<sup>1</sup> St Ambr. Serm. 68.<sup>2</sup> In Ps. 118.<sup>3</sup> Serm. 253.<sup>4</sup> Hist. lib. viii. c. 8.

Asterius say he was nailed to the cross; Tertullian mentions that he was tied with cords. He was probably both nailed and bound with ropes. F. Pagi places the martyrdom of these two apostles in the year 65, on the 29th of June.

St Gregory writes that the bodies of the two apostles were buried in the catacombs, two miles out of Rome.<sup>1</sup> The most ancient Roman Calendar, published by Bucherius, marks their festival at the catacombs on the 29th of June. An ancient history read in the Gallican church in the eighth century says their bodies only remained there eighteen months. From those catacombs where now stands the Church of St Sebastian the body of St Paul was carried a little further from Rome, on the Ostian road; and that of St Peter to the Vatican hill, probably by the Jewish converts who lived in that quarter. At present the heads of the two apostles are kept in silver bustoes in the Church of St John Lateran. But one half of the body of each apostle is deposited together in a rich vault in the great Church of St Paul, on the Ostian road; and the other half of both bodies in a more stately vault in the Vatican church, which sacred place is called from primitive antiquity, "The Confession of St Peter, and Limina Apostolorum," and is resorted to by pilgrims from all parts of Christendom. The great St Chrysostom never was able to name either of these holy apostles without raptures of admiration and devotion; especially when he mentions the ardent love of St Peter for his divine Master. He calls him "the mouth of all the apostles, the leader of that choir, the head of that family, the president of the whole world, the foundation of the Church, the burning lover of Christ."

St Peter left all things to follow Christ; and in return received from him the promise of life everlasting, and in the bargain a hundredfold in this present life. O thrice happy exchange! O magnificent promise! cries out St Bernard. O powerful words, which have robbed Egypt and plundered its richest vessels! which have peopled deserts and monasteries with holy men, who sanctify the earth, and are its purest angels, being continually occupied in the contemplation and praises of God, the ever glorious uninterrupted employment of the blessed, which these spotless souls begin on earth to continue for all eternity in heaven. They have chosen with Mary the better part, which will never be taken from them. In this how great is their everlasting reward! How pure their present comfort and joy! and yet how cheap the purchase! For, what have they left? what have they bartered? Only empty vanities; mere nothings; nay, anxieties, dangers, fears, and toils. Goods which by their very possession are a burden; which by their loss or continual disappointments, perplex, fret, disturb, and torment; and which, if loved with attachment, defile the soul. Goods which Crates, the heathen philosopher, threw into the

<sup>1</sup> St Greg. lib. iii. Ep. 30.



sea to be rid of their troubles, saying, "Go into the deep, ye cursed incentives of the passions. I will drown you, lest I be drowned by you."<sup>1</sup> I am too weak to bear your burden. To possess you without defiling my heart, to enjoy you without covetousness, pride, or ambition is a difficult task, and the work of an extraordinary grace, as truth itself hath assured us. Happy are they who follow the Lord without encumbrance or burden! who make their journey to him without the load of superfluous baggage or hindrance! All are entitled to this present and future happiness who repeat these words of St Peter in their hearts and affections, though they are seated on thrones, or engaged by the order of providence in secular affairs. They use the world as if they used it not, living in it so as not to be of it, and possess its goods so as to admit them into their houses, not into their hearts. They are solicitous and careful in their temporal stewardship, that they may be able to give an account to their Master who has entrusted them with it; yet live in their affections as strangers on earth and citizens of heaven. Those on the other side are of all others most unhappy, who in some measure imitate the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, whilst they repeat the sacred words of the apostle with lying mouths; who renounce the world in body only, and carry in affection its inordinate desires and lusts, its spirit and contagion, into the very sanctuaries which are instituted to shelter souls from its corruption.

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 29 :*

ST EMMA, widow, having sanctified her family by her example in the married state, founded the great double Benedictine monastery of Gurk and therein took the veil ; she died in 1045 : ST PETER, Prince of the Apostles, and ST PAUL (SS. PETER AND PAUL) ; but the Mass of this day being almost entirely devoted to St Peter and the day often called " St Peter's Day," St Paul is especially honoured on the following date.

## JUNE 30

### ST PAUL, THE APOSTLE

[From his epistles and the Acts of the Apostles. See Tillemont, t. 1.]

THOUGH St Paul was not one of the twelve, yet so miraculous was his vocation by the immediate voice of Christ from heaven; so wonderful the manner in which he was sent by the express command of the Holy Ghost to instruct all nations; so extraordinarily was he rapt to the third heaven, by which (to use the words of St Maximus) he was authorised and consecrated to the apostleship in heaven itself, and learned among angels what he was to teach among men; so eminent was his gift of inspiration and his spirit of prophesy; and lastly, so many and so great were the things which he suffered and did for the honour of God, and for the conversion of nations, that he has been justly entitled to hold a place among the apostles. His miraculous conversion the church commemorates on the 25th of

<sup>1</sup> " Abite in profundum, malæ cupiditates ; ego vos mergam, ne mergar à vobis."

January. After he was baptized he stayed some days at Damascus, and there preached Christ openly in the synagogue.<sup>1</sup> But he soon retired into Arabia, probably into the country near Damascus, which city was in the power of Aretas, King of Arabia, and father-in-law to Herod Antipas. It is not mentioned how long he lived in this retirement; but coming back to Damascus, he began again to preach the faith, and confuted the Jews with wonderful force. That obstinate race, seeing themselves unable to enter the lists against him, laid a plot to take away his life, and prevailed with the governor of Damascus, under Aretas, to promise them his concurrence.<sup>2</sup> They therefore kept continual watch, searched many houses, and obtained a guard of this governor to be placed at the gates to apprehend him; but the holy convert was let down by the brethren in a basket over the wall by night. He had then continued three years partly at Damascus and partly in his retirement in Arabia, and took this occasion to go to Jerusalem to see St Peter. St Barnabas, who knew him, introduced him to SS. Peter and James, and satisfied them and the church of the sincerity of his conversion: for many of the Christians at first shunned his company, fearing some design in one who had been their most furious enemy.

St Paul stayed fifteen days at Jerusalem, during which time he enjoyed the conversation of St Peter, and was very active in disputing against the Jews in their synagogue; but such was their obstinacy that they shut their ears to the truths of salvation; and not being able to withstand the force of his discourses and the evidence in which he placed the divine revelation, they had recourse to rage and violence, the impotent weapon of disappointed malice; and they sought to take away his life. The disciples, therefore, that he might escape their snares, conducted him to Cæsarea, and thence sent him by sea to Tarsus, his native city. He remained there upwards of three years, and preached in the neighbouring countries of Cilicia and Syria with great success. The disciples who had fled from Jerusalem to Antioch, after the martyrdom of St Stephen, disposed the hearts of many to receive the gospel. St Barnabas coming thither in 43, made a motion to the other disciples that St Paul might be sent for, not doubting but by the aid of so able an assistant the work of God would be advanced in that great city. The proposal being readily embraced, by an order of the apostles he went to Tarsus and brought St Paul down to Antioch, where they diligently joined their labours for the space of a whole year: about that time the disciples at Antioch were first called Christians. Agabus, a prophet, coming with others from Jerusalem to Antioch, foretold a great famine; which accordingly happened the next year, which was the fourth of the Emperor Claudius, of the Christian era 44. This calamity

<sup>1</sup> Acts ix.

<sup>2</sup> See *Dissertationes tres D. Pr. Walch*: 1<sup>o</sup>. De Ethnarchâ Judæorum Damascenorum Paulo insidiantium. Act. ix. 23, 24. 2<sup>o</sup>. De Simone Coriario. Act. x. 6. 3<sup>o</sup>. De Agabo Vate. Act. xx. 10. Gottingæ, Anno 1758.

afflicted the whole empire, but particularly Judæa. When the Christians of Antioch heard of the miseries which their brethren there suffered, they made a charitable collection to the utmost of their abilities, which they sent by St Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, for the relief of the distressed in that church. The bearers of this seasonable alms, having executed their commission, came back to Antioch, which church then flourished exceedingly, and in it were many eminent doctors and holy prophets: among these the chief were Barnabas, Simon surnamed Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manahen, and Saul or Paul.

It seems to have been about this time that St Paul was favoured with his most extraordinary ecstasy, in which he was taken up into the third heaven or paradise, and heard and saw most sublime mysteries, which man could not utter; of which he speaks fourteen years after.<sup>1</sup> For his humiliation under these favours, he was molested with a sting of the flesh, and the buffets of Satan,<sup>2</sup> by which St Chrysostom and Theodoret understand persecutions, St Basil<sup>3</sup> some corporal infirmity, as a violent headache; but St Austin,<sup>4</sup> St Jerom,<sup>5</sup> Bede, and St Thomas a temptation of the flesh; which opinion Godeau has attempted to prove by an elegant dissertation. This apostle, not satisfied with his incredible labours, chastised his body also with severe fasting, watchings, and other great mortifications, fearing lest whilst he preached to others, he might himself fall into dangers and forfeit his crown.<sup>6</sup> He feared no dangers, was deterred by no difficulties, nor daunted by any torments, or death in any form, in so noble a cause; but rejoiced in the greatest sufferings, fatigues, and labours, that he might make God everywhere known, and might endeavour with his whole strength to bring all men to his most sweet and holy love. He esteemed himself for this a debtor to the whole world, Greeks and barbarians, the wise and the unwise, learned and unlearned, Jews and Gentiles. This pure love of God and ardent zeal for his glory could not have kindled this holy flame and consumed in him all earthly affections had he not been crucified to the world and dead to himself. In this disposition he so studied Christ crucified as to put on his sentiments, and to animate himself with the perfect spirit of his divine meekness, patience, charity, and humility. He could say with confidence that he carried the marks of the precious wounds of Christ in his own body, that with him he was nailed to the cross, that he would glory in no other thing save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he no longer lived himself, but that Christ lived in him. God was pleased to call his servant to this great work at a time when the doctors at Antioch were employed in preaching, and were joined by the faithful in fasting and prayer, which pious public exercises have always attended the election of new ministers in the church. The Holy Ghost commanded,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. xiii.<sup>4</sup> Conc. 2, in Ps. lviil.<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 7.<sup>5</sup> Ep. ad Eustoch.<sup>3</sup> Regul. fusior. cap. ult.<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 27; 2 Cor. vi. 5.

by some of the prophets, that Saul and Barnabas should be set apart for a special office of preaching. By this we are to understand the function of the apostleship, that they might propagate the faith over all nations with full authority.<sup>1</sup> Thus was St Paul assumed to the apostleship.<sup>2</sup> Though the other apostles lived by the gospel, he chose not to make use of that liberty, but to gain his subsistence by making tents,<sup>3</sup> such as were used by soldiers and mariners. Nevertheless, this apostle received sometimes the voluntary alms of the Christians, rejoicing in their charity, not for himself, but for their sake.<sup>4</sup> For as to himself, having tried all things, he was prepared for all, ever content with his condition wherever he was.<sup>5</sup> He knew how to live in want and in hunger, as well as in plenty. To defend the dignity of his apostleship, upon which the success of his preaching depended, he mentioned once his revelations and privileges; but compelled by necessity for the salvation of many souls and conversion of nations: and he speaks of them in such a manner as to show that he gave all the glory to God alone, and made no account of them himself, but trembled and humbled himself more under such favours. In things which seemed to his advantage it is visibly his tongue only that mentions them, without the heart, when solicitude for the souls of his brethren betrayed the secret of his humility. But he glories in his infirmities; his heart speaks by the instrument of his tongue when he recounts whatever was a subject of confusion to him, and he styles himself from the sincere sentiment of his heart, a blasphemer, a persecutor, an abortive, the last of the apostles and unworthy to bear that name.

We have, in the Acts of the Apostles, a summary account of the missions of St Paul after he had received the imposition of hands. Taking with him St Barnabas in 44, he travelled from Antioch to Seleucia, and embarking there, sailed to Cyprus. He preached first in the Jewish synagogue at Salamis; and afterwards up and down the island till he arrived at Paphos, a large city on the other side of the isle, in which resided Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul. This governor was a wise and prudent man, but was seduced by the magical arts of a Jewish impostor, one Barjesus, otherwise called Elymas, surnamed the Sorcerer. The proconsul was moved by the reputation of the miracles of St Paul, and desired to hear him speak. Elymas opposed the preaching of the apostle; but the saint by his malediction smote him with blindness for a time, so that he could not see the sun. Sergius Paulus, at the sight of this miracle and by hearing St Paul, was converted and received the sacrament of baptism. Origen and St Chrysostom tell us that Elymas recovered his sight by embracing the faith. Some think that our apostle took the name of Paul from this illustrious proconsul; and St Luke from

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiii.<sup>2</sup> Gal. i. 11, 12.<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 6, 12. Acts xviii. 3. See A. Lapide, Calmet, and Synopsis Critic. ib.<sup>4</sup> Phil. iv. 10.<sup>5</sup> Phil. v. 11.

this time usually calls him so: others look upon it as more probable that he changed his name upon his own conversion. St Paul, leaving Cyprus, went by sea to Perge in Pamphilia; where John Mark, who had followed the two apostles, doing little offices about the poor, forsook them and returned to Jerusalem, not having courage to undergo the fatigues of the missions. Our apostle hastened from Perge to Antioch, the capital of Pisidia, and there preached in the synagogue on two sabbath-days. Many were induced by his discourses to believe in Christ; but the more obstinate Jews drove him and Barnabas out of their country. The apostles shook the dust off their shoes in testimony of their incredulity, and preached next at Iconium in Lyconia. There God so blessed their labours that many, both Jews and Gentiles, believed, and the two apostles continued a considerable time in the city to instruct the converts, till they were obliged to depart privately to escape being stoned by the enemies of truth who were enraged at their success. After this they visited Lystra, Derbe, and other towns and villages in that country. At Lystra happened the cure of a man who had been lame from his birth and had never walked, to whom St Paul restored his strength and the use of his limbs by bidding him stand upright on his feet, in the midst of a public assembly. This made the heathens take St Barnabas for Jupiter, on account of his gravity and comeliness, and St Paul for Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. In this persuasion the populace prepared to offer them sacrifice, and for that purpose the priests of Jupiter brought oxen dressed up with garlands, after the Gentile manner, to the place where they were. Paul and Barnabas rent their garments to testify their abhorrence of such an attempt, and prevented their abominable sacrifices. Soon after, St Paul was stoned by the same giddy mob, and was dragged out of the city for dead; but by the care of the disciples he recovered, and returned into the city with them. However, not to provoke his persecutors, he departed the next day with St Barnabas to Derbe, where our preacher converted a great number. They returned by Lystra, Iconium, and other places (ordaining priests in every church) to Antioch in Syria, after an absence of about three years. During the four following years St Paul preached over Syria and Judæa; and that interval seems to be the time in which he carried the gospel from Jerusalem into the West, so far as Illyricum.<sup>1</sup>

The apostle, speaking of his missions, passes over the innumerable conversions, miracles, and wonders which he wrought, and only mentions his sufferings, for the cross was his glory. He tells us that he had undergone more labours, and suffered more frequent imprisonments and more stripes, than any other. He was often near death by rivers, thieves, and dangers from Jews and from false brethren, in towns and in deserts; he endured all manner of fatigues, frequent watchings, fasting, hunger, thirst,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xv. 19.

and nakedness. He had been five times publicly whipped by the Jews, receiving each time thirty-nine stripes; and had been thrice beaten with rods by the Romans or Gentiles; had thrice suffered shipwreck; and been a day and a night in the depth of the sea,<sup>1</sup> that is, in a vessel which was so long shattered and tossed amidst the waves. After this progress we find him again at Antioch, in 51, whence he went to Jerusalem and assisted at the first general council held by the apostles at Jerusalem. St Clement of Alexandria assures us that all the apostles were present at it. St Luke mentions in it only St Peter and St James, and also assures us that St Paul and St Barnabas recounted in it the progress which they had made by their preaching among the Gentiles. St Paul informs us<sup>2</sup> that he was acknowledged by the church the apostle of the Gentiles. Judas and Silas being deputed by the council to carry its decrees to Antioch, Paul and Barnabas bore them company so far. St Peter came after them and meekly suffered the generous reproof of St Paul. Our apostle stayed some time in that city to confirm in the faith the new converted flock; and then set out to visit the churches he had founded in the East, but would not admit John Mark again into his company: upon which St Barnabas took him and went into Cyprus. St Chrysostom<sup>3</sup> says that both St Paul and St Barnabas had good reasons for what they did; both sought only the greater glory of God, and they parted in perfect charity, as appears by the affectionate mention St Paul makes of Barnabas in his other epistles. "Would to God," says this holy doctor, "that all our disputes had never any other motive but that of duty, nor any other end than the good of souls." Upon this occasion St Paul made Silas, or Sylvanus, his companion, and visited the churches in Syria, Cilicia, and Pisidia. At Lystra, in Lycaonia, he took St Timothy for his disciple, and circumcised him to show his condescension to the Jews, though he refused to circumcise Titus, to assert the liberty of the gospel, which freed men from the servitude of the old law and the obligation of its ceremonial precepts. These, being all types of Christ, were to cease when they were fulfilled by the new law of the gospel, to which they gave place as figures to the reality.<sup>4</sup>

From Lycaonia St Paul passed into Phrygia and Galatia. He tells us that the Galatians received him as an angel from God, and would willingly, had it been possible, have pulled out their very eyes to have given them to him.<sup>5</sup> The apostle desired then to go into Lesser Asia, but was hindered by the Spirit of God, or by a special revelation for that time; as he was also from passing into Bithynia. St Chrysostom admires how joyfully and readily he acquiesced in the divine will, inquiring no reasons, alleging no motives, because in all things he sought only the divine will. Whilst he remained at Troas, preaching the gospel, in a vision in the night a

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 23.<sup>4</sup> Matt. xi. 13.<sup>2</sup> 2 Gal. ii. 7.<sup>5</sup> Gal. iv. 13.<sup>3</sup> Chrys. Hom. 34, in Act.

Macedonian seemed to stand before him, entreating him to come into his country and help that people. The evangelist St Luke begins in this place first to use the term *we* and to speak in the first person,<sup>1</sup> whence most interpreters date from this time his attending upon St Paul in the ministry of the word. He had been converted at Antioch, and Bishop Pearson will have him to have been a disciple of St Paul at Antioch eight years before; but from this time he became his inseparable companion, and seems never after to have left him. St Paul being thus invited into Macedon, took ship with Silas, Luke, and Timothy, and went to Samothracia, an isle in the Ægean Sea not far from Thrace; and the next day arrived at Neapolis, a port of Macedon. From thence they proceeded to Philippi, a famous city and a Roman colony. There St Paul preached in a Jewish *Proseuche* or oratory, which stood by the side of a river at a little distance from the town and converted, among others Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, a seller of purple in that city, though a native of Thyatira. This devout woman and her family so earnestly pressed St Paul to lodge with her that he was obliged to accept of her entertainment: so long as the holy men continued in this city, they resorted every day to the same place of devotion. After several days, being on the road thither, they were met by a young woman possessed by a devil, who was in great reputation in that country for soothsaying, and of which her masters made a great profit. This girl cried out after the saints, "These men are servants of the most high God, who preach unto us the way of salvation." Thus she continued to follow them some days. As Christ would not suffer the devil to confess him, lest his lying tongue should prejudice the truth among men, and because he would not admit the spirit of darkness to any commerce with the works of light; so St Paul at length commanded this evil spirit, in the name of Jesus, to come out of the damsel; and the devil, though unwilling, obeyed, and left her that instant. The covetous masters of the girl saw this miraculous cure would prove a great loss to them, and stirred up the populace against the preachers, hurried them before the magistrates, by whose order they were scourged as seditious persons, and afterwards thrust into the inner dungeon and there laid on their backs with their feet fastened in great wooden stocks. In the night they were praising God aloud when an earthquake shook the prison, the doors flew open, and the fetters fell off all the prisoners; but no one went out of the dungeon. The jailer was awaked by the earthquake and noise; and seeing the prisons open, imagined the prisoners had all made their escape; wherefore, in the apprehension that his life must pay for that accident, he was going to dispatch himself with his sword had not St Paul prevented him, hastily crying out, "Do thyself no harm; we are all here." The man, equally surprised at the miracle and at the apostle's goodness, threw himself at the feet of the holy

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvi. 10.

men and desired to be baptized, with his whole house. The magistrate, the next morning, sent an order for the enlargement of the servants of God. St Paul, who had alleged nothing to prevent his scourging, then complained that a Roman citizen had been whipped against the laws, and refused to depart without more ample satisfaction. This he did to intimidate the judges and procure their favour for the protection of the converts. The magistrates, trembling at the name of a Roman citizen, came in person, craved pardon of the prisoners, and submissively entreated them to depart.

The apostles having laid in this city the foundation of a very eminent church, as appears from St Paul's epistle to the Philippians, took leave of the devout Lydia and the rest, and, travelling through Amphipolis and Apollonia, arrived at Thessalonica, the capital of Macedon. St Paul there preached three Sabbath-days in the synagogue, and converted some Jews and a great number of Gentiles, who by their patience became the model of the whole church and were particularly dear to their spiritual father.<sup>1</sup> The unbelieving Jews envied that city the prosperity of the gospel, and gathering together a number of wicked ruffians, beset the house of Jason, a considerable man, who entertained the apostles; but St Paul and Silas having been removed by the Christians and concealed in a more secret place, the mob seized upon Jason and carried him before the magistrates, who obliged him to give bail and security for his good behaviour. When the tumult was over, Paul and Silas left the town in the night and went to Berea. The Jews of this place listened to the gospel with joy, and many Gentiles were also converted. A tumult at length obliged St Paul to quit that town; but Silas and Timothy stayed behind some time to instruct the converts, whilst St Paul made for Athens, whither he afterwards sent for Timothy and Silas. The city of Athens had not so far degenerated in the sciences, but it was still stored with many learned and wise men. The inhabitants were very superstitious; and so careful were they that no deity should want due honour from them that they had an altar inscribed, "To the unknown God." Whether by this title they meant all unknown pretended gods of other nations, or the true God of the Jews, is uncertain; for the pagans often styled this latter the unknown God, because he had no particular name like their false deities. St Paul preached to the Jews in their synagogue, and to the Gentiles in all public places, even in the Areopagus itself, the supreme court of magistrates, most venerable over all Greece for their great wisdom and learning. Dionysius, one of these judges, embraced the faith; also Damaris, an illustrious woman in the city, and some others. But though the philosophers were not able to enter the lists against a man full of the Spirit of God and instructed by his light, yet many of them derided his doctrine concerning the resurrection of the dead, and others who were struck with the thunder of his discourses said

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 7.



only they would hear him some other time. At Athens St Timothy came to St Paul out of Macedon, but Silas was detained longer behind, probably by business or sickness. The apostle hearing that his dear converts at Thessalonica were under persecution from their fellow-citizens ever since his departure, was much concerned lest some of them should lose courage, and sent Timothy to comfort and strengthen them. Paul himself was conducted by a call of the Holy Ghost from Athens to Corinth, where he lodged in the house of Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who were of the same trade with himself. Aquila was a native of Pontus, but had resided at Rome till Claudius banished all the Jews out of that city; upon which occasion he came to Corinth. St Paul worked with him at his trade of cent-making, and on the Sabbath taught in the Jewish synagogue and brought many, both Jews and Greeks, over to the faith. It was from Corinth that he wrote his two epistles to the Thessalonians, both in the same year, 52. These are the first of his writings. He suffered much in this city from persecutions and from the obstinacy of wicked men. Nevertheless, he persevered for the sake of the good; and Christ assured him that he had a numerous people in that place.<sup>1</sup> Novatus, elder brother to the philosopher Seneca, who having been adopted by L. Junius Gallio, a noble Roman, and from him called Gallio, was at that time proconsul of Achaia. The Jews carried St Paul before him; but being a man of integrity and moderation, he answered the accusers that he was judge of wrong and injustice, not of controversies of religion; and so dismissed the cause and acquitted the apostle. St Paul having stayed at Corinth eighteen months, went to Cenchrea in order to go to Jerusalem for the following passover. In this port he shaved his head and made the religious vow of the Nazarites, who bound themselves to drink no wine and to let their hair grow till a limited time, when they again cut it, and offered certain sacrifices. By his conforming to this Jewish rite, St Paul made himself a Jew with the Jews to gain them to Christ.

Embarking at Cenchrea, he sailed first to Ephesus and thence to Cæsarea in Palestine, and from that place by land travelled to Jerusalem, where he kept the festival. He then went to Antioch and travelled again through Galatia, Phrygia, and other parts of Asia, everywhere encouraging the faithful and watering his young plants. Coming back again from Cappadocia to Ephesus, he stayed there almost three years, preaching both in public places and private houses and performing great miracles, even by handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched his body.<sup>2</sup> During three months he addressed himself to the Jews, but seeing their invincible obstinacy he turned to the Gentiles. Seven sons of Sceva, a prince of the Jewish priesthood (that is, probably, chief of one of the twenty-four sacerdotal families), attempted to cast out devils in the name of Jesus,

<sup>1</sup> Acts xviii. 9, 10.<sup>2</sup> Acts xix.

though they were not Christians but Jews. The devil answered that he knew them not, and assailed them with great fury. Thus was their vanity punished, and all were moved by this example to treat that holy name with respect. Many seeing the folly of their superstitions, burned their books of magic and judiciary astrology. These persons had before been converted to the faith and baptized, but out of ignorance and fondness for the foolish superstitions of divination, had still retained such practices and books: their eyes being opened by the instructions of the apostle, they burned the books of that detestable art, and came confessing their sinful deeds; that is, not only acknowledging themselves sinners in general terms, but declaring their actions or sins in detail to the priests. We must take notice that one Apollos, an eloquent Jew of Alexandria, being instructed at first only in the rudiments of Christianity, and John's baptism, coming to Ephesus after the first preaching of SS. Peter and Paul in that place, preached Christ with great zeal. Being afterwards more fully instructed in the faith by Aquila and Priscilla, he taught at Corinth with great success, watering what St Paul had planted.

By the labours and miracles of our apostle, the word of God spread every day exceedingly at Ephesus; and he found there a great door opened to him, but had many adversaries. He suffered much from the persecutions of the Jews, was every hour exposed to divers dangers; and protests, upon oath, that he died daily; that is, he was continually exposed to the danger of death. He fought with beasts "according to man";<sup>1</sup> that is, according to Tertullian, St Cyprian, and other fathers, also A. Lapide, Calmet, Tillemont, &c., he was exposed to be devoured by them in the amphitheatre, though he was delivered by God. He was again in imminent danger of that death in the same place. In the year 57, Demetrius, a covetous silversmith, who made a great gain by selling silver images of Diana, finding this trade much diminished by the preaching of St Paul, stirred up the city against him. The stately, rich temple of Diana at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world, and the image of that goddess kept there was pretended to have been formed by Jupiter and dropped down from heaven: it was held in great veneration through all the Grecian and Roman provinces; and the heathens got little silver images made in imitation of it. Upon the alarm that the honour of this tutelar goddess was attacked, the whole city was in the greatest combustion imaginable; and everyone cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." It was in vain to argue or reason with a mob, especially heated with rage and stirred up by interest and superstition. St Paul was sought for to be exposed to wild beasts in the theatre, but could not be found. However, his two companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, zealous Macedonians, were seized on, hurried to the theatre, and the wild beasts were called for to be let loose

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 32. See Calmet's Diss. on this subject, p. 206, and Tillemont, note 40.

upon them. St Paul desired to show himself and to speak in behalf of his companions; but the overseers of the theatrical games, who were his friends, sent to him to assure him that he would only endanger himself without rescuing them. One Alexander, a Jewish convert, offered to speak; but the mob, suspecting him to be a friend of the apostle, would not hear him; though he would doubtless have thrown the blame on St Paul if he was, as is generally thought, that Alexander the coppersmith of whom the apostle complains that he had done him much evil, and greatly withstood his words, and whom he delivered over to Satan for his apostasy for blaspheming Christ and reproaching Christianity.<sup>1</sup> But the mob raised an outcry against this apologist for near two hours together, wherein nothing was heard but "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." And Alexander himself was secured. At length the town-clerk, who kept the register of the games, discreetly addressed the populace and put them in mind that if any man had offended them the courts of justice were open and ready to do them right; but that by their riot they had rendered themselves obnoxious to the laws, if anyone should call them to an account for that day's tumult. By this discourse the multitude was appeased and immediately dispersed; and Gaius, Aristarchus, and Alexander were released without hurt. St Paul had made an excursion in the year 55 to Corinth, and writ his epistle to the Galatians full of zeal and apostolic vigour, because they were a rough uncultivated nation, and had received false doctors who pretended to establish an obligation of practising the Jewish ceremonies, and of joining circumcision with the gospel. In 56 he wrote to the Corinthians, being informed that an unhappy division threatened that church, some being for Cephas, others for Paul, others for Apollos, as if these teachers did not all preach the same Christ.

Soon after the tumult mentioned above, St Paul left Ephesus and went by Troas a second time into Macedon, whence he sent his second epistle to the Corinthians, whom he visited shortly after a third time. St Austin was persuaded<sup>2</sup> that he then regulated, as he had promised in his letter, the rite and manner of assisting at the divine mysteries, in particular that the body of our Lord should not be received at supper, but only by persons fasting; which is certainly a precept of the apostles, as the same father observes. From Corinth, in 58, the apostle writ to the Romans, expressing a great desire to see the faithful of that illustrious city and a purpose to pay them a visit. After three months' stay in Greece, having gathered large alms of the Christians in Macedon and Achaia for the poor of Jerusalem, he set out for Syria, but stopped some time at Philippi and a whole month at Troas.<sup>3</sup> In this city the day before his departure the faithful assembled to receive the holy communion and to hear him preach,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 14; 1 Tim. i. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xx. St Chrys. Hom. 43, in Act.

<sup>3</sup> St Aug. Ep. 118, ad Jan.

and such was their ardour that they passed the hour of dinner and also that of supper, though it was on a Sunday and in Easter time; but neither he nor his auditors knew any hunger but that of holy zeal on such an occasion. Thus they remained till midnight, when the devil sought to disturb their devout assembly; but this malice only turned to his own confusion. While the apostle was preaching in a room in the third story, a young man called Eutychus, being overcome by sleep, fell down to the ground and was taken up dead. But St Paul immediately restored him to life and continued his instructions till break of day. The apostle left Troas on Monday the 17th of April, and went on foot to Assos, where taking ship he sailed to Mitylene, a city in the isle of Lesbos; thence to Samos, another island in the Ægean sea, and at length landed at Trogyllium, a promontory of Ionia. The day following he proceeded to Miletus, a famous city in Caria, where he was met by the priests and elders of Ephesus thirty miles from this latter city. He made them a most moving farewell discourse, and their parting was most tender.

From Miletus St Paul went to the isle of Coos, and the next day to Rhodes; in a third to Patara, a city of Lycia, where he went on board another vessel bound for Tyre in Phœnicia, at which port he arrived after five days' sail. Certain prophets among the Christians at Tyre conjured him not to go up to Jerusalem, foretelling him what evils he had there to suffer. When they were not able to prevail they embraced and prayed with him on the shore. From Tyre he went by sea to Ptolomais, and thence to Cæsarea. There Agabus, the prophet, foretold him that he should be put in chains at Jerusalem, and the Christians endeavoured to dissuade him from that journey; but he answered them that he was ready not only to be bound but also to die for the name of Jesus Christ.

Thence he proceeded to Jerusalem, where he lodged in the house of Mnason, a Cyprian. This was the fifth visit which he paid to the church of Jerusalem, where he arrived in the year 58, about the twenty-third after his conversion. At Jerusalem he distributed the alms he brought, and was advised by St James and the priests to defray the expenses of the sacrifices of four Nazarites, whose term was expired. He complied with this devotion, that he might prove to the Jews that he did not condemn their law, and this his intention he declared to the priests, performing himself the legal purifications.

When he had been seven days in Jerusalem, certain Jews who had opposed him in Asia, being come up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, stirred up the Jews of that city against him. For seeing him with Trophimus, an Ephesian and a Gentile, in the city, they falsely imagined that he had carried him into the temple and so had profaned it. Upon an outcry that he contemned the temple and the law of Moses, the people ran together, and laying violent hands upon the apostle, drew him

out of the temple that they might beat and kill him. Claudius Lysias, a Roman tribune, had the command of the garrison that was kept in the castle Antonia, to prevent riots and seditions, to which the Jews were very prone, especially at the time of the three great festivals. This officer was immediately informed of the tumult, and taking a body of soldiers he marched down upon the rioters who, being awed by his presence, left off beating St Paul, and the tribune took him out of their hands; but commanded him to be bound with two chains. Lysias suspected him to be a certain Egyptian who had been the author of a late sedition; but finding himself mistaken, he gave the prisoner leave to speak to the people. St Paul with great tranquillity gave them an account of his miraculous conversion and of his commission to preach to the Gentiles. At the mention of this last article the populace began to cry out with great rage, demanding his death. Lysias, to learn from him the state of the affair, commanded that he should be tied to a pillar in order to be scourged. Whilst the executioner was binding his hands, the apostle asked the centurion that stood by if a Roman could be whipped, and even unheard, without even crime or trial. The centurion intimated this to Lysias who, hearing that he was a Roman citizen, began to be afraid, and ordered him to be loosed, saying himself had purchased that privilege for a large sum of money. Lysias had led him into the castle Antonia; and the next day he sent to the high priest and all the council to come and give him a meeting out of the camp or district of the castle where the garrison was, that from them he might inform himself what the matter was. When St Paul began to speak, Ananias the high priest bade some of the standers-by to strike him on the face. The apostle was ready in his heart to turn the other cheek, but to encourage his followers exerted himself boldly in the cause of truth, and checked so unjust a violence offered to one who was in the hands of a Roman magistrate and had committed no offence. He therefore reproached him, and threatened that God would smite him, calling him a whited wall, that is, a hypocrite. St Austin says these words were a prophecy. This Ananias was soon after deposed from the high priesthood by Agrippa the younger; and having hastened the ruin of his country by forming a dangerous faction in it, was slain one of the first, together with his brother, by another faction which was headed by his own son. Yet the apostle, when he was put in mind who the person was, made his excuses that he did not know him to be the high priest, or he would have spoken to him with more respect; so much did he honour the very shadow of priesthood which was then extinct. The resurrection of Christ being a capital point of our faith, St Paul then cried out that he was impeached for maintaining the resurrection of the dead. The Pharisees, being zealous advocates for that article against the Sadducees, at these words declared themselves for the apostle, and a warm contention arose among the Jews

themselves. Lysias, fearing lest St Paul should be torn to pieces in the tumult, sent a party of soldiers to fetch him out of the council into the castle. Jesus Christ, to show that he is nearest his servants when they are in the most grievous afflictions, appeared to St Paul the second night after this danger, and encouraged him with an assurance that he should give testimony to him at Rome.

Forty Jews having conspired to murder him, Lysias sent him under a strong guard to Felix, the governor of the province, who resided at Cæsarea. The high priest Ananias followed him thither to accuse him, taking with him Tertullus, an eloquent orator or lawyer who, after an insinuating address, opened the charge against the apostle, whom he impeached for stirring up seditions and preaching the new religion of the Nazaræans or Christians. St Paul, having obtained leave from Felix, entered upon his defence with telling the governor it was a great comfort to him that he was to plead his cause before one who had long sat judge of that nation. He then easily cleared himself from the calumny of sedition and of having profaned the temple; and confessed that he worshipped God in the way which his accusers called heresy, but added that it was agreeable to the sense of the prophets and the faith of his forefathers; and that in the expectation of the resurrection of all men, good and bad, he was careful to live with an unblamable conscience towards God and man. The accusation as to religion was of no weight with Felix: yet he detained the apostle in prison two years, partly to please the Jews and partly hoping to receive money from the Christians for his releasement. This Felix was a wicked man, raised to that dignity from a slave, and in governing his province he carried extortions and tyranny to the greatest height. He was absolute and uncontrollable so long as he was shielded under the protection of Pallas; but after the fall of that minister it was more easy for the Jews to send complaints against him to Nero; and this induced him to keep St Paul prisoner in order to court their favour, unless he could have got some money by setting him at liberty. In the meantime, he frequently called the apostle before him, taking much delight in hearing him discourse; but curiosity and covetousness were his motives, and his passions got the better of all the impressions of grace. He had three wives, among whom she that held the first rank was Drusilla, daughter to the elder Agrippa, an impious apostate from Judaism and an adulteress who had abandoned her own husband Aziz, King of Emesa, preferring the bed of this profligate idolater. Some days after the first hearing of St Paul at Cæsarea, Felix being with Drusilla sent for the apostle before him, and hearing him discourse on justice, chastity, and the judgment to come, trembled. But stifling his remorse, he said, "Go away for the present, I will call thee at a convenient time." O criminal delay! O words, enemies to all grace! cries out St Austin. Hurry of worldly affairs, dis-

sipation, sloth, pleasures, and what not will never afford this convenient time, till the unhappy soul on a sudden shall see herself buried in hell, and shall feel herself awaked from her lethargy by the smart of the unquenchable flames. The other conferences of this judge with St Paul were equally fruitless. Neither could he extort from him any money, the apostle having other uses for his alms. Two years after, this governor was recalled to Rome, in the year 60; and, being accused by the Jews before Nero, he only escaped the punishment which his crimes deserved by immense sums of money.

Porcius Festus succeeded him in the government of Judæa, a man of somewhat better character. St Paul was again impeached by the Jews before him, but appealed to the emperor that he might not be abandoned to the rage of malicious prosecutors; and his appeal was admitted by the governor, being a right and privilege granted by the laws to Roman citizens, to secure their lives and fortunes from the arbitrary dealings of corrupt magistrates. Agrippa the younger (after the death of his father, the elder Agrippa, in 44) saw Judæa a second time reduced into a Roman province; but in 48, upon the death of his uncle Herod, King of Chalcis, was declared by the Emperor Claudius king of that small territory, being between the Libanus and Antilibanus, with the power of appointing the high priest of the Jews. The tetrarchate of Galilee, and some other small principalities, were afterwards added to his dominions. This prince came to Cæsarea to compliment the new governor, bringing with him his sister Berenice, a lewd and vicious woman, as may be seen in Josephus. Festus asked the advice of Agrippa what he could write to the emperor concerning his prisoner; and that prince, who had heard much of St Paul, was very desirous to see him. Therefore the governor caused him the next day to be brought before him. The apostle, in a solemn audience, addressed himself to the young king, and explained to him the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; and related his own miraculous conversion. Festus, a worldly man, addicted to his passions and unacquainted with such spiritual truths, admired the saint's eloquence and sublime doctrine; but said he was beside himself and that much learning had made him mad. St Paul calmly replied that his words were not the effects of madness, but were serious and sober truths; and, for a proof, appealed to the king, who was not a stranger to the writings of the prophets that were accomplished in Christ. Agrippa could not but confess that he had *almost* persuaded him to become a Christian. It was only *almost*, because he shut his heart against the motion of grace, the Christian faith not being the fashionable religion in the world. They who neglect to listen to the call of heaven, and to improve the favourable visit of the Holy Ghost, in punishment of their abuse of grace usually perish in their sin. St Paul returned his hearty wishes, that both king and the whole honourable

assembly were, not in part only, but entirely as much Christians as himself—unlike him only in the chains which he bore on that account. Agrippa told Festus that he might have been discharged forthwith had not his appeal to Cæsar bound him to appear at Rome; for the appeal being once received in a court, the inferior judge had no power either to acquit or condemn.

Pursuant to this appeal, Festus delivered St Paul to Julius, a centurion of a company belonging to the legion of Augustus. The apostle had with him Luke, Aristarchus, and some others. In September they went on board a ship of Adramyttium, a port of Mysia, and sailed northward. They cast anchor at Sidon, where Julius, who was a courteous man, permitted St Paul to go on shore to see his friends and to refresh himself. Putting out from thence, they had a tedious voyage with contrary winds, sailed near Cyprus, and coasted along Cilicia and Pamphylia, till they arrived at Myra, in Lycia, where this ship finished its voyage. They then went on board a ship of Alexandria bound for Italy carrying two hundred and seventy-six persons. The winds were so contrary that it was several days before they were brought opposite to Cnidus, a promontory and city of Caria: hence they were carried over against Salmone, a promontory of Crete, which they doubled, and came to a place called the Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea or Thalassa, in that island. It being then October and the seas dangerous, St Paul advised the centurion and mariners to winter in that place; they would not listen to the proposals and were for wintering at Phœnice, a much better haven on another side of the island. They therefore sailed forward; but soon after there arose a violent north-east wind, which bore upon them so furiously that the seamen could not govern the ship and were forced to give it up to the mercy of the winds and waves, which carried it to a small island called Claudia, on the south-west of Crete. Here they were obliged to ungird the ship to save it from splitting. The next day, being more violently tossed by the storm, they threw overboard the merchant goods, and two days after also the tackle and furniture of the vessel. So violent was the storm that they were fourteen days without once seeing the sun, moon, or stars, and almost without eating. Nothing but horror surrounding them, they were all grown hopeless and comfortless when St Paul assured them that the vessel indeed would be lost, but that they should all escape with their lives and be saved on an island. God had sent an angel to him the night before with the message: "Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." For his sake God granted the lives of all the company, consisting of two hundred and seventy-six souls. The mariners happening by the sounding in the night to find but twenty, and soon after but fifteen fathom of water, perceived some land was near, and not daring to venture any further for fear



of sands or rocks, they let down four anchors and earnestly wished for day. The sailors laid a plot to save themselves in the boat, which they privately let down; but St Paul informed the centurion of their design and advised him to prevent such an accident, for the rest must have been left to perish if no one remained capable of steering the vessel. The soldiers therefore cut the ropes which held up the boat on the side of the ship and let it fall into the sea, that the sailors might not be able to leave the vessel. The apostle comforted the company by repeating the strongest assurances that not one of them should be lost, nor so much as a hair of any man's head perish. For fourteen days they had ate next to nothing; he therefore persuaded them to take some nourishment cheerfully; and when they had all plentifully refreshed themselves they threw the rest of the provisions into the sea to lighten the vessel. When it was day they descried land, and weighing anchor made for shore up a creek, but unexpectedly fell into a place where two currents of the sea meet. There the vessel run aground and, the head of the ship being fixed in a sand-bank, the stern was broke to pieces by the violence of the waves, and the vessel bulged. In this extremity the soldiers were for killing the prisoners, lest they should escape upon coming to land; but the centurion, being desirous to save Paul, would not suffer it; and the whole company arrived safe on shore, some by swimming, others on planks of the vessel. "Behold," says St Chrysostom,<sup>1</sup> "what it is to live in the company of a saint, though a prisoner, and to have him a protector in all dangers."

The land they had made to was the island of Malta, which was then subject to the Romans. The inhabitants treated the distressed strangers with great humanity, making for them large fires to dry their clothes and cherish their limbs, which were benumbed with cold. While St Paul was busied in throwing a bundle of sticks on the fire, a viper, dislodged by the heat, came out of the wood and fastened on his hand; but he shook it off into the flames without receiving any hurt. The people expected he would swell soon, drop down, and die, and cried out he must be some murderer pursued by divine vengeance. But seeing the miraculous event, they said he must sure be some god. Publius, the principal person in the island, probably the Roman governor, entertained the whole crew at his house for three days with great kindness. His hospitality was recompensed; for his father being at that time sick of a fever and dysentery, St Paul went in, prayed, laid his hands on him, and restored him to his health. When this was reported abroad, others brought their sick to the apostle and they were cured by him. This made the islanders honour their guests exceedingly and furnish them with plenty of all necessary provisions. After three months' stay in this island, St Paul and his company set sail for Rome in an Alexandrian vessel, named the *Castor and Pollux*, which had lain

<sup>1</sup> Hom. 53, in Acta.

there all the winter. They touched at Syracuse, in Sicily, and at Reggio, in Calabria, and landed at Pozzuolo, near Naples. Finding some Christians there, the apostle was prevailed on to stay seven days with them. Hence he proceeded near one hundred miles by land to Rome. The Christians of that capital hearing of his coming, several of them went out to meet him, some as far as to Forum Appii, forty-eight miles, others to Tres Tabernæ, now called Cisterna, twenty-two miles from Rome. He arrived at that city in the beginning of spring, in the year 61. Julius, the captain, delivered his prisoners to the Præfectus Prætorio, Afranius Burrhus, an officer of great wisdom and moderation, and of chief authority during the first years of Nero, whose brutish temper was much restrained by the counsels of Seneca and Burrhus till the death of the latter in 62. St Paul was treated with great indulgence and permitted to live in a house which he hired, only with a constant guard upon him and always fettered with a chain; one end of which was probably, according to the Roman custom, fastened about the guard, who was obliged to accompany him everywhere, but was often changed. During his custody he preached freely to those who resorted to him, first to the Jews; afterwards, with much greater fruit, to the Gentiles. No accusers appearing against him, after two years he was set at liberty. Here St Luke ends his history of the Acts of the Apostles, which from the thirteenth chapter is a narrative of the travels of St Paul. The Philippians sent Epaphroditus, their bishop, with money to St Paul for his relief during his imprisonment, and the apostle wrote to them his most tender epistle in 62, in which he exhorts them to be upon their guard against false teachers, who pretended that the law of circumcision obliges Christians. Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, an eminent citizen of Colossæ in Phrygia, served St Paul in his confinement, and the apostle obtained of his master his pardon and liberty by his most tender and eloquent Epistle to Philemon. He sent by Onesimus, the same year 62, his Epistle to the Colossians, who had been converted to the faith, not by St Paul, but by Epaphras, who was their bishop. The apostle warns them against a superstitious worship of angels, which certain disciples of Simon Magus endeavoured to introduce. It was also in Italy that he wrote his Epistle to the Hebrews, probably about the year 63.

Some time after his enlargement he returned again from Rome into the East, as he had promised in all the above-mentioned Epistles. There he undertook new voyages, preached again over many countries and suffered over again chains, prisons, torments, conflicts, and continual dangers of death. He had a design, when he writ to the Romans, of visiting Spain; but this, Pope Gelasius thinks,<sup>1</sup> he never executed. He in this journey established the faith in Crete, and left St Titus bishop there; as he did St Timothy at Ephesus. He wrote his first epistle to this latter out of

<sup>1</sup> Conc. t. iv. p. 1253.

Macedon; according to St Jerom, from Nicopolis, in Epirus, which was then reckoned part of Macedon. He wrote to St Titus from Greece or Achaia, under which name the Romans then comprehended also Peloponnesus, and whatever provinces of old Greece they did not attribute to Macedon. The apostle went back into Asia, and at Troas lodged with one Carpus. He made several other voyages, in which he had much to suffer.<sup>1</sup> He had excommunicated Hymenæus and Philetus at Ephesus for denying the resurrection of the body.

No distance of nations could confine the ardour of this apostle's zeal. From the East he returned again to Rome. St Athanasius assures us<sup>2</sup> that God had made known to him by a revelation that he should suffer martyrdom in that city; whereupon, instead of flying, he with joy hastened thither. St Austin and other fathers testify the same; and this foresight of his death may also be gathered from the assurance with which he speaks of it in his second Epistle to Timothy. He came this second time to Rome about the year 64; St Dionysius of Corinth insinuates that it was in company with St Peter.<sup>3</sup> We learn from the Epistle of St Paul to the Philippians<sup>4</sup> that several persons of the emperor's household had before this embraced the faith. St Luke informs us that St Paul found many Christians in Rome upon his first coming thither; St Peter had begun to preach there probably sixteen years or more before the arrival of St Paul. Suetonius testifies that Claudius banished the Jews out of Rome for the tumults raised by them concerning Christ. Tacitus tells us that Pomponia Græcina, an illustrious lady under Claudius, married to A. Plautius (who, in four years' successful war, had first reduced the south-east part of Britain, near the Thames, into a Roman province), was accused of practising foreign superstitions; by which historians generally understand the Christian religion, which had then been preached in Rome by St Peter and his disciples. She was referred to her husband's judgment, who, in presence of a meeting of relations, according to ancient custom, examined into the matter and, with their approbation, pronounced her innocent. This happened about the year 57, before the faith was deemed a crime at Rome, though an attachment to old superstitions always disposed many to oppose it. Great numbers, and among these many illustrious persons, had embraced it when Nero began the first general persecution of the church. St Chrysostom tells us<sup>5</sup> that St Paul converted, among others, a beloved concubine of Nero, and that she thereupon changed her course of life, forsook the court, and served God in great sobriety and virtue, which provoked the tyrant and was the first occasion of St Paul's imprisonment. The same father adds that this apostle, whilst in prison, converted one that was cup-bearer to the emperor, which incensed the tyrant more than

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 11.<sup>4</sup> Phil. iv. 20.<sup>2</sup> Apol. pro fuga, p. 713.<sup>5</sup> Hom. 46, in Act., et lib. i. de Vit. Monast. c. 4.<sup>3</sup> Ens. lib. ii. c. 25.

ever. St Paul informs us that when he was put in prison he was abandoned by all that had any credit at court, but says that he received the greater comfort and strength from God in his first appearing before Nero.<sup>1</sup> One Alexander, a coppersmith, was a great stickler against him,<sup>2</sup> perhaps the same Alexander whom he excommunicated a little before. He was probably some Jew or apostate Christian, whose fall was owing to pride and envy. St Clement I, pope, who was then in Rome and a disciple of St Peter, says that jealousy was one of the principal causes of this apostle's martyrdom.<sup>3</sup>

His confinement must have continued at least a year; for, in his second Epistle to Timothy, he desires him to come from Ephesus to Rome before winter.<sup>4</sup> Yet he did not suffer before the following year. During his second imprisonment, besides this second Epistle to Timothy, he wrote one to the Ephesians, in which he takes the title of prisoner of Jesus Christ as that which of all others is the most honourable. This apostle represents all inanimate creatures as groaning in pain, and desiring, according to their manner, their deliverance from the slavery of corruption and their renovation at the last day to serve for the greater glory of the elect; and adds that we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body.<sup>5</sup> The will of God, and zeal for promoting his honour on earth, tempered the sorrow of this delay; and he always rejoiced in an entire resignation of himself to the sweet appointments of heaven.<sup>6</sup> But at length the happy term of his labours and dangers approached, and he beheld with joy the great moment in which Christ called him to his glory. The Holy Ghost had discovered to him the day and the hour long before, as St Prudentius assures us. His martyrdom happened in the year 65, on the 29th of June. St Sulpicius Severus says<sup>7</sup> that it fell out before the war in Judæa, which broke out in May in the twelfth year of Nero, of Christ, 66.

St Paul was beheaded, as St Peter of Alexandria,<sup>8</sup> Eusebius, St Jerom, St Chrysostom, Prudentius, and other ancient writers testify; and his dignity of a Roman citizen did not allow him to be crucified. He suffered at the Salvian waters, which piece of ground St Gregory the Great, part of whose estate it was, gave on that account to the church where his body rested.<sup>9</sup> By the manner in which St Clement, pope,<sup>10</sup> speaks of his death, it seems that Nero himself was present at it. It appears by Eusebius<sup>11</sup> that this apostle's body, in the second century, lay on the Ostian road where his church now stands. His head is kept in the Church of St John Lateran; but his body lies with St Peter's, half in the Vatican and half

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 16.<sup>2</sup> Ib. v. 14.<sup>3</sup> St Clem. Rom. Ep. 1, ad Cor. c. 5.<sup>4</sup> St Chrys. Hom. 8, in Ephes. iii. 1.<sup>5</sup> Rom. viii. 19.<sup>6</sup> Phil. i. 21.<sup>7</sup> St Sulp. Sever. Hist. Eccl.<sup>8</sup> Can. 9.<sup>9</sup> St Greg. M. lib. xii. Ep. 9.<sup>10</sup> St Clem. Rom. Ep. 1, ad Cor. c. 5.<sup>11</sup> Hist. lib. ii. c. 25.

in his own church, in sumptuous vaults. His chains were also preserved in Rome, and St Chrysostom, who earnestly desired to travel from Antioch to Rome that he might salute them and apply them to his eyes, says they made the devils tremble, and were revered by the angels.<sup>1</sup> That father has expressed his extraordinary veneration for this apostle in his homilies upon his canonical Epistles, and in seven panegyrics,<sup>2</sup> in which he paints his charity, his zeal, his patience, his sufferings, and the thunder of his sacred and inspired eloquence, with the most tender and affecting devotion, with a loftiness both of style and sentiment as unparalleled as his theme, and with an eloquence truly worthy so great an apostle and so incomparable a panegyrist. If with this holy father we study the spirit of St Paul in his life and sacred writings, so as to form our own upon this perfect model, then we shall begin to learn what it is to be true disciples of Christ.

The day of the death of the renowned conquerors has been forgotten, whilst that of a poor artisan is everywhere honoured, says St Chrysostom.<sup>3</sup> The same father takes notice<sup>4</sup> that men have a greater respect for the tomb of this apostle than they ever had for any living prince that had reigned in Rome. It was enclosed in a magnificent church, built by Constantine the Great, of which Prudentius has given us an admirable description.<sup>5</sup> The great palaces of kings and princes have nothing so great or admirable. Here people come from all parts of the world, with wonderful piety and zeal, to implore the succour and intercession of this apostle; even emperors humbly prostrate themselves before his tomb, says St Austin.<sup>6</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on June 30 :*

ST MARTIAL, Bishop of Limoges, one of the first apostles of France (about the year 250); many miracles were wrought through his relics : and ST PAUL, the Apostle of the Gentiles, also honoured on the previous day under the title of the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul.

<sup>1</sup> St Chrys. Hom. 8, in Ephes.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. 26, in 2 Cor.

<sup>3</sup> Hom. 4, in 2 Tim.

<sup>4</sup> St Chrys. t. ii. p. 476, ed. Ben.

<sup>5</sup> Hymn. 6, alias 12.

<sup>6</sup> St Aug. Ep. 42.

JULY 1

ST RUMOLD, BISHOP, MARTYR, PATRON OF MECHLIN

(A.D. 775)

[From the Bollandists; Ward, Act., &c.; St Rumoldi, Lov. 1662, 4to;  
Sellerii Act. St Rumoldi, An. 1718, &c.]

ST RUMOLD renounced the world in his youth and embraced a state of voluntary poverty, being convinced that whatever exceeds the calls of nature is a useless load and a perfect burden to him that bears it. He was the most declared enemy to voluptuousness; and by frugality, moderation, and a heart pure and disengaged from all seducing vanities and desires of what is superfluous, he tasted the most solid pleasure which virtue gives in freeing a man from the tyranny of his passions, when he feels them subjected to him and finds himself above them. Victorious over himself by humility, meekness, and mortification, he reaped in his soul, without any obstacles from self-love or inordinate attachments, the sweet and happy fruits of assiduous prayer and contemplation, whereby he sanctified his studies, in which he made great progress, and at the same time advanced daily in Christian perfection. He had faithfully served God many years in his own country, when an ardent zeal for the divine honour and the salvation of souls induced him to travel into Lower Germany to preach the faith to the idolaters. He made a journey first to Rome, to receive his mission from the chief pastor, and with the apostolic blessing went into Brabant, great part of which country about Mechlin he converted to the faith. He was ordained a regionary or missionary bishop, without any fixed see. He frequently interrupted his exterior functions to renew his spirit before God in holy solitude. In his retirement he was slain on the 24th of June, in 775, by two sons of Belial, one of whom he had reprov'd for adultery. His body was thrown into a river, but being miraculously discovered, it was honourably interred by his virtuous friend and protector, Count Ado. A great and sumptuous church was built at Mechlin to receive his precious relics, which is still possessed of that treasure and bears the name of this saint. The city of Mechlin keeps his feast a solemn holiday, and honours him as its patron and apostle. Janning, the Bollandist, gives a long history of his miracles. His great church at Mechlin was raised to the metropolitical dignity by Paul IV. Ware says that the feast of St Rumold was celebrated as a double festival, with an office of nine lessons, throughout the province of Dublin before

3 A

the Reformation. It was extended to the whole kingdom of Ireland in the year 1741.

It was from the spirit of prayer that the saints derived all their lights and all their strength. This was the source of all the blessings which heaven, through their intercession, showered down on the world, and the means which they employed to communicate an angelical purity to their souls. "This spirit," says a father of the church,<sup>1</sup> "is nourished by retreat, which in some manner may be called the parent of purity." This admirable transformation of our souls produced by prayer is to be attributed to God's glory, which by prayer he makes to shine in the secret of our hearts.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 1 :*

ST CALAIS, first Abbot of Ancille in France : ST CYBAR, a recluse in Angouleme : ST GAL, Bishop of Clermont : ST JULIUS and ST AARON, two Britons who glorified God by their martyrdom at Carleon about 303 : ST LEONORUS, in French LUNAIRE, Bishop, of a noble family in Wales ; he was educated under St Iltud : BLESSED OLIVER PLUNKETT, the last to be martyred under the English penal laws : ST RUMOLD, Bishop and martyr, patron of Mechlin or Malines : ST SIMEON, surnamed SALUS, a native of Egypt, born about 522, lived twenty-nine years in the desert : ST THIERRI, Abbot of Mont d'Hor, near Rheims : and ST THEOBALD or THIBAUT.

## JULY 2

### VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

FROM the example of Christ, his blessed Mother, and the apostles, St Thomas shows<sup>2</sup> that state to be in itself the most perfect which joins together the functions of Martha and Mary, or of the active and contemplative life. This is endeavoured by those persons who so employ themselves in the service of their neighbour, as amidst their external employs or conversation often to raise their minds to God, feeding always on their heavenly invisible food, as the angel did in Toby's company on earth. Who also, by the practice and love of daily recollection and much solitude, fit themselves to appear in public; and who by having learned the necessary art of silence in its proper season, and by loving to speak little among men,<sup>3</sup> study to be in the first place their own friends, and by reflection and serious consideration to be thoroughly acquainted with themselves, and to converse often in heaven.<sup>4</sup> Such will be able to acquit themselves of external employs without prejudice to their own virtue, when called to them by duty, justice, or charity. They may avoid the snares of the world and sanctify their conversation with men. Of this the Blessed Virgin is to us a perfect model, in the visit paid to her cousin Elizabeth, as St Francis of Sales takes notice, who borrowed from this mystery the name which he gave to his Order of nuns, who, according to the first plan of their institute, were devoted to visit and attend on the sick.

<sup>1</sup> St John Damascen. Serm. de Transfig. Dom.  
<sup>2</sup> Imit. of Chr. b. i. c. 20.

<sup>3</sup> St Tho. ii. 2.  
<sup>4</sup> Phil. iii. 29.

The angel Gabriel, in the mystery of the Annunciation, informed the mother of God that her cousin Elizabeth had miraculously conceived, and was then in the sixth month of her pregnancy. The Blessed Virgin, out of humility, concealed the favour she had received and the wonderful dignity to which she was raised by the incarnation of the Son of God in her womb; but in the transport of her holy joy and gratitude she would go to congratulate the mother of the Baptist; with which resolution the Holy Ghost inspired her for his great designs in favour of her Son's precursor, not yet born. "*Mary therefore* arose," saith St Luke, "and with haste went into the hilly country, into a city of Juda; and entering into the house of Zachary saluted Elizabeth." She made this visit to a saint, because the company of the servants of God is principally to be sought, from whose example and very silence the heart will always treasure up something, and the understanding receive some new light and improvement in charity. As glowing coals increase their flame by contact, so is the fire of divine love kindled in a fervent soul by the words and example of those who truly love God. In this journey what lessons of humility does the Holy Virgin give us! She had been just saluted mother of God and exalted above all mere creatures, even the highest seraphim of heaven; yet far from being elated with the thoughts of her incomprehensible dignity, she appears but the more humble by it. She prevents the mother of the Baptist in this office of charity; the mother of God pays a visit to the mother of her Son's servant; the Redeemer of the world goes to his precursor. What a subject of confusion is this to the pride of the children of the world! who, not content with the rules of respect which the law of subordination requires, carry their vanity to an excess of ceremoniousness contrary even to good manners and to the freedom of conversation, which they make an art of constraint and of torture, both to themselves and others; and in which they seek not any duty of piety or improvement in virtue, but loathsome means of foolish flattery, the gratification of vanity, or that dissipation of mind which continually entertains it with trifles and idleness, and is an enemy to serious consideration and virtue.

When the office of charity called upon Mary, she thought of no dangers or difficulties in so painful and long a journey of above fourscore miles from Nazareth in Galilee to Hebron, a sacerdotal city in the mountainous country, on the western side of the tribe of Juda. The inspired writer takes notice that she went with haste, or with speed and diligence, to express her eagerness to perform this good office. Charity knows not what sloth is, but always acts with fervour. She likewise would hasten her steps out of modesty, not choosing to appear abroad but as compelled by necessity or charity; not travelling out of vanity, idleness, or curiosity, but careful in her journey to shun the dissipation of the world, according to the remarks of St Ambrose. Whence we may also gather with what



care she guarded her eyes, and what was the entertainment of her pious soul with God upon the road. Being arrived at the house of Zachary, she entered it and saluted Elizabeth. What a blessing did the presence of the God-man bring to this house, the first which he honoured in his humanity with his visit! But Mary is the instrument and means by which he imparts to it his divine benediction; to show us that she is a channel through which he delights to communicate to us his graces, and to encourage us to ask them of him through her intercession. At the voice of the mother of God, but by the power and grace of her Divine Son, in her womb, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and the infant in her womb was sanctified; and miraculously anticipating the use of reason, knew by divine inspiration the mystery of the incarnation, and who it was that came to visit him. From this knowledge he conceived so great, so extraordinary a joy as to leap and exult in the womb. If Abraham and all the ancient prophets exulted only to foresee in spirit that day when it was at the distance of so many ages, what wonder the little Baptist felt so great a joy to see it then present! How eagerly did he desire to take up his office of precursor, and already to announce to men their Redeemer, that he might be known and adored by all! But how do we think he adored and revered him present in his mother's womb? and what were the blessings with which he was favoured by him? He was cleansed from original sin, and filled with sanctifying grace, was made a prophet, and adored the Messiah before he was yet born.

At the same time Elizabeth was likewise filled with the Holy Ghost; and by his infused light she understood the great mystery of the Incarnation which God had wrought in Mary, whom humility prevented from disclosing it even to a saint and an intimate friend. In raptures of astonishment, Elizabeth pronounced her blessed above all other women, she being made by God the instrument of his blessing to the world, and of removing the malediction which through Eve had been entailed on mankind. But the fruit of her womb she called blessed in a sense still infinitely higher, he being the immense source of all graces, by whom only Mary herself was blessed. Elizabeth then turning her eyes upon herself, cried out, "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" She herself had conceived, barren, and by a miracle; but Mary, a virgin, and by the Holy Ghost. She conceived one greater than the prophets; but Mary, the eternal Son of God, himself true God. The Baptist, her son, used the like exclamation to express his confusion and humility when Christ came to be baptized by his hands. In the like words and profound sentiments ought we to receive all the visits of God in his graces, especially in the holy sacraments. Elizabeth styles Mary, Mother of her Lord, that is, mother of God; and she foretells that all things would befall her and her Son which had been spoken by the prophets.

Mary, hearing her own praise, sunk the lower in the abyss of her nothingness, and, converting all good gifts to the glory of God, whose gratuitous mercy had bestowed them, in the transport of her humility and melting in an ecstasy of love and gratitude, burst into that admirable canticle called the *Magnificat*. It is the first recorded in the New Testament, and both in the noble sentiments which compose it and in the majesty of the style surpasses all those of the ancient prophets. It is the most perfect model of thanksgiving and praise for the incarnation of the Son of God, and the most precious monument of the profound humility of Mary. In it she glorifies God with all the powers of her soul for his boundless mercies, and gives to him alone all the glory. In the spiritual gladness of her heart she adores her Saviour, who had cast his merciful eyes upon her lowliness. Though all nations will call her blessed, she declares that nothing is her due but abjection, and that this mystery is the effect of the pure power and mercy of God; and that he who had dethroned tyrants, fed the hungry in the wilderness, and wrought so many wonders in favour of his people, had now vouchsafed himself to visit them, to live among them, to die for them, and to fulfil all things which he had promised by his prophets from the beginning. Mary stayed with her cousin almost three months, after which she returned to Nazareth.

Whilst with the Church we praise God for the mercies and wonders which he wrought in this mystery, we ought to apply ourselves to the imitation of the virtues of which Mary sets us a perfect example. From her we ought particularly to learn the lessons by which we shall sanctify our visits and conversation; actions which are to so many Christians the sources of innumerable dangers and sins. What proofs of our vanity and folly, what disgraces, what perplexities, what detractions, and other evils and sins should we avoid if we were but sparing and reserved in our words! If we find ourselves to swell with an itch of talking, big with our own thoughts, and impatient to give them vent, we must by silence curb this dangerous passion and learn to be masters of our words.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 2 :*

THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY : ST MONEGONDES, a recluse in Tours, turned to God through grief at the death of her two daughters : ST ORHO, Bishop of Bamberg, a native of Suabia : ST OUDOCEUS, third Bishop of Landaff, succeeded his uncle St Thelias in that see : ST PROCESSUS and ST MARTINIAN, converted by the preaching of Saints Peter and Paul; these two faithful disciples gained the crown of martyrdom.

JULY 3

## ST PHOCAS, GARDENER, MARTYR

(A.D. 303)

[From his panegyric, written by St Asterius, and another by St Chrysostom, t. ii. Ed. Ben. p. 704; Ruinart, p. 627.]

ST PHOCAS dwelt near the gate of Sinope, a city of Pontus, and lived by cultivating a garden, which yielded him a handsome subsistence and wherewith plentifully to relieve the indigent. In his humble profession he imitated the virtue of the most holy anchorets, and seemed in part restored to the happy condition of our first parents in Eden. And what a field for contemplation does a garden offer to our view in every part, raising our souls to God in raptures of love and praise, stimulating us to fervour by the fruitfulness with which it repays our labour and multiplies the seed it receives; and exciting us to tears of compunction for our insensibility to God by the barrenness with which it is changed into a frightful desert unless subdued by assiduous toil! Our saint joining prayer with his labour, found in his garden itself an instructive book and an inexhausted fund of holy meditation. His house was open to all strangers and travellers who had no lodging in the place; and, after having for many years most liberally bestowed the fruit of his labour on the poor, he was found worthy also to give his life for Christ. Though his profession was obscure, he was well known over the whole country by the reputation of his charity and virtue.

When a cruel persecution, probably that of Diocletian in 303, was suddenly raised in the Church, Phocas was immediately impeached as a Christian; and such was the notoriety of his pretended crime that the formality of a trial was superseded by the persecutors, and executioners were despatched with an order to kill him on the spot wherever they should find him. Arriving near Sinope, they would not enter the town, but stopping at his house without knowing it, at his kind invitation they took up their lodging with him. Being charmed with his courteous entertainment, they at supper disclosed to him the errand upon which they were sent, and desired him to inform them where this Phocas could be most easily met with. The servant of God, without the least surprise, told them he was well acquainted with the man and would give them certain intelligence of him next morning. After they were retired to bed he dug a grave, prepared everything for his burial, and spent the night in disposing his soul for his last hour. When it was day he went to his guests and told them Phocas was found, and in their power whenever they pleased to apprehend him. Glad at this news, they inquired where he was. "He is here present," said the martyr; "I myself am the man."

Struck at his undaunted resolution and at the composure of his mind, they stood a considerable time as if they had been motionless, nor could they at first think of imbruing their hands in the blood of a person in whom they discovered so heroic a virtue, and by whom they had been so courteously entertained. He indirectly encouraged them, saying that as for himself he looked upon such a death as the greatest of favours and his highest advantage. At length recovering themselves from their surprise, they struck off his head. The Christians of that city, after peace was restored to the Church, built a stately church which bore his name and was famous over all the East. In it were deposited the sacred relics, though some portions of them were dispersed in other churches.

St Asterius, bishop of Amasea about the year 400, pronounced the panegyric of this martyr on his festival, in a church probably near Amasea, which possessed a small part of his remains. In this discourse<sup>1</sup> he says "that Phocas from the time of his death was become a pillar and support of the churches on earth: he draws all men to his house; the highways are filled with persons resorting from every country to this place of prayer. The magnificent church which (at Sinope) is possessed of his body is the comfort and ease of the afflicted, the health of the sick, the magazine plentifully supplying the wants of the poor. If in any other place, as in this, some small portion of his relics be found, it also becomes admirable and most desired by all Christians." He adds that the head of St Phocas was kept in his beautiful church in Rome, and says "The Romans honour him by the concourse of the whole people, in the same manner they do Peter and Paul." He bears testimony that the sailors in the Euxine, Ægean, and Adriatic seas, and in the ocean, sing hymns in his honour, and that the martyr has often succoured and preserved them; and that the portion of gain which they in every voyage set apart for the poor is called Phocas's part. He mentions that a certain king of barbarians had sent his royal diadem set with jewels, and his rich helmet, a present to the church of St Phocas, praying the martyr to offer it to the Lord in thanksgiving for the kingdom which his Divine Majesty had bestowed upon him. St Chrysostom received a portion of the relics of St Phocas, not at Antioch, as Baronius thought, and as Fronto le Duc and Baillet doubt, but at Constantinople, as Montfaucon demonstrates.<sup>2</sup> On that solemn occasion the city kept a great festival two days and St Chrysostom preached two sermons, only one of which is extant.<sup>3</sup> In this he says that the emperors left their palaces to reverence these relics, and strove to share with the rest in the blessings which they procure men. The Emperor Phocas built afterward another great church at Constantinople in honour of this martyr, and caused a considerable part of his relics to be translated thither. The Greeks often style St Phocas hiero-martyr, or sacred martyr, which epithet

<sup>1</sup> P. 178, ed. Combefis.<sup>2</sup> Not. ib. t. ii. p. 704. Op. St Chrys.<sup>3</sup> T. ii. ed. Ben. p. 704.

they sometimes give to eminent martyrs who were not bishops, as Ruinart demonstrates against Baronius.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 3 :*

ST BERTRAN, Bishop of Mans : ST GUTHAGON, recluse, an Irishman who led a penitential life near Bruges : ST GUNTHERN, Abbot in Brittany in the sixth century : ST LEO II, Pope in the seventh century : ST PHOCAS, a gardener in Sinope, a city of Pontus, renowned for his piety, martyred in 303.

JULY 4

## ST ULRIC, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF AUGSBURG

(A.D. 973)

[From his accurate life, written by Gerard of Ausburg, in Mabillon, sæc. 2, Ben., &c.  
See the Bollandists.]

ST ULRIC or UDALRIC was son of Count Hucbald and of Thietberga, daughter of Burchard, one of the first dukes of Higher Germany. He was born in 893, and was educated from seven years of age in the abbey of St Gal. Guiborate, a holy virgin who lived a recluse near that monastery, foretold him that he should one day be a bishop and should meet with severe trials, but exhorted him to courage and constancy under them. So delicate and tender was the complexion of the young nobleman that all who knew him judged he could never live long. But regularity and temperance preserved a life and strengthened a constitution which excessive tenderness of parents, care of physicians, and all other arts would probably have the sooner worn out and destroyed: which Cardinal Lugo shows to have often happened by several instances in austere religious Orders.<sup>1</sup> The recovery of the young count was looked upon as miraculous. As he grew up, his sprightly genius, his innocence and sincere piety, and the sweetness of his temper and manners charmed the good monks; and he had already made a considerable progress in his studies when his father removed him to Augsburg, where he placed him under the care of Adalberon, bishop of that city. The prelate, according to the custom of those times, made him his chamberlain when he was only sixteen years old, afterwards promoted him to the first orders and instituted him to a canonry in his cathedral. The young clergyman was well apprised of the dangers and instructed in the duties of his state, which he set himself with all his strength faithfully to discharge. Prayer and study filled almost all his time, and the poor had much the greatest share in his revenues. During a pilgrimage which he made to Rome this bishop died and was succeeded by Hiltin. After his return he continued his former manner of life, advancing daily in fervour and devotion and in the practices of humility and mortification. He was most scrupulously careful to shun as much as possible the very shadow of danger, especially with regard to temptations against purity, and it was his usual saying to others: "Take away the fuel, and you take away the flame."

<sup>1</sup> Lugo in Decal. See Less. L. de Valetud.

Hiltin dying in 924, Henry the Fowler, king of Germany, nominated our saint, who was then thirty-one years of age, to the bishopric of Augsburg, and he was consecrated on Holy Innocents' day. The Hungarians and Sclavonians had lately pillaged that country, murdered the holy recluse St Guiborate whom the Germans honour as a martyr, plundered the city of Augsburg and burnt the cathedral. The new bishop, not to lose time, built for the present a small church, in which he assembled the people who, in their universal distress, stood in extreme need of instruction, comfort, and relief: all which they found so abundantly in Ulric that everyone thought all the calamities they had suffered sufficiently repaired by the happiness they enjoyed in possessing such a pastor. He excused himself attending the court, knowing of what importance the presence of a bishop is to his flock, for which he is to give a severe account to God. The levying and care of his troops, which in quality of prince of the empire he was obliged to send to the army, he intrusted to a nephew, devoting himself entirely to his spiritual functions. He rose every morning at three o'clock, to assist with his canons at matins and lauds; after which he recited the psalter, litany, and other prayers. At break of day he said in choir the office for the dead, and prime, and was present at high mass. After tierce and long private devotions he said mass. He only left the church after none, and then went to the hospital, where he comforted the sick, and every day washed the feet of twelve poor people, giving to each of them a liberal alms. The rest of the day he employed in instructing, preaching, visiting the sick, and discharging all the duties of a vigilant pastor. He took his frugal meal only in the evening before complin. In this the poor always shared with him, for whom and for strangers meat was served up, except on fast days, though he never touched it himself. He allowed himself very little time for sleep, lay on straw, and never used any linen. In Lent he redoubled his austerities and devotions. He made every year the visit of his whole diocese, and held a synod of his clergy twice a year. Upon the death of Henry I, Otho I succeeded in the kingdom of Germany, between whom and his unnatural son Luitolf a civil war broke out. St Ulric strenuously declared himself against the rebels, who on that account harassed and plundered his diocese. But Arnold, count palatine, being slain before the walls of Ratisbon, St Ulric obtained the king's pardon for his son and the rest of the rebels.

The saint had fenced the city of Augsburg with strong walls, and erected several fortresses to secure the people from the inroads of barbarians. This was a precaution of the utmost importance, for the Hungarians made a second incursion and laid siege to Augsburg. The good pastor continued in prayer, like Moses on the mountain, for his people, whom he convened in frequent processions and devotions. His prayers were heard, and the barbarians, being seized with a sudden panic fear, raised

nobility of the Low Countries, but vie with most royal families in Europe; the former having given five emperors to the Germans, several kings to Hungary and Bohemia, a queen to France, and innumerable renowned heroes, whose great actions are famous in the histories of Europe and the East. But none of their exploits have reflected so great a lustre on these families as the humility of our St Peter. He was son to Guy of Luxemburg, count of Ligny, and to Maud, countess of St Pol; and was born at Ligny, a small town in Lorraine, in the diocese of Toul, in 1369. He was nearly related to the emperor Wenceslas, Sigismund, king of Hungary, and Charles VI, king of France. He lost his pious father at three years of age, and his most virtuous mother a year after; but his devout aunt, the countess of Orgieres and countess dowager of St Pol, took care of his education, and made a prudent choice of most virtuous persons whom she placed about him. By the excellent example and precepts of his masters, and the strong impressions of an early grace, he seemed formed by nature to perfect virtue. In his tender age the least sallies of the passions seemed rather prevented than subdued; and his ardour in the pursuit of virtue so far surpassed the ordinary capacity of children of his tender age that it was a matter of astonishment to all that knew him. His assiduity and fervour in prayer, his secret self-denials, great abstemiousness, and, above all, his love of humility in an age when others are usually governed only by the senses, seemed a miracle of divine grace. He made a private vow of perpetual chastity before he was seven years of age, and he contrived by a hundred little artifices that no poor person should ever be dismissed wherever he was without an alms. At ten years of age he was sent to Paris, where he studied Latin, philosophy, and the canon law. In the meantime his eldest brother, Valeran, count of St Pol, was taken prisoner by the English in a battle in which they defeated the French and Flemings in Flanders. Upon the news that his brother was made prisoner and sent to Calais, Peter, in 1381, interrupted his studies, went over to London, and delivered himself up a hostage for his brother till his ransom should be paid. The English were charmed with his extraordinary virtue, and after he had stayed a year in London, generously gave him his liberty, saying his word was a sufficient pledge and security for the ransom stipulated. King Richard II invited him to his court; but Peter excused himself and hastened back to Paris to his studies. His watchings and fasts were very austere, and he made no visits but such as were indispensable, or to persons of extraordinary virtue, from whose conversation and example he might draw great spiritual advantage for the benefit of his own soul. With this view he often resorted to Philip of Maisiers, a person eminently endowed with the double spirit of penance and prayer, who, having been formerly chancellor of the kingdoms of Jerusalem and Cyprus, led for twenty-five years a retired life in the convent of the Celestines in Paris

without taking any vows or professing that order. From this devout servant of God our saint received important instructions and advice, which gave him great light in the exercises of prayer and in the paths of interior spiritual perfection.

In 1383 his brother, the count of St Pol, obtained for him a canonry in our Lady's, at Paris; which ecclesiastical preferment was to him a new motive to increase his fervour in the divine service. His devotion and assiduity in choir, his charity towards all, his innocence, his perfect spirit of mortification, and his meekness edified exceedingly the whole city; and the modesty with which he endeavoured to conceal his virtues was like a fine transparent veil through which they shone with redoubled lustre. His humility was most conspicuous, of which the following instance, among others, is recorded. When a young clerk refused to carry the cross at a solemn procession, the new canon took it up and carried it with so much devotion that the whole city was struck with admiration to see him. Peter strove only to advance in humility and Christian perfection: this was the sole point which he had in view in all his actions and undertakings; and he was very far from aspiring to the least ecclesiastical dignity. But the reputation of his extraordinary sanctity reaching Avignon, Clement VII, who in the great schism was acknowledged by France for true pope, nominated him archdeacon of Dreux, in the diocese of Chartres, and soon after, in 1384, bishop of Metz, his great sanctity and prudence seeming to many a sufficient reason for dispensing with his want of age. But Peter's reluctance and remonstrances could only be overcome by a scruple which was much exaggerated to him, that by too obstinate a disobedience he would offend God. He made his public entry at Metz barefoot; and riding on an ass, to imitate the humility of our divine Redeemer. He would suffer no other magnificence on that occasion than the distribution of great alms and largesses among the poor; nor would he admit any attendants but what might inspire modesty and piety.

He had no sooner taken possession of his church than, with the suffragan Bertrand, a Dominican who was given him for his assistant and consecrated bishop of Thessaly, he performed the visitation of his diocese, in which he everywhere corrected abuses and gave astonishing proofs of his zeal, activity, and prudence. He divided his revenues into three parts, allotting one to his church, a second to the poor, and reserving a third for himself and family, though the greatest share of this he added to the portion of the poor. On fast-days commanded by the church he took no other sustenance than bread and water; and he fasted in the same austere manner all Advent, and all Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays throughout the year. When several towns had revolted from him and created for themselves new magistrates, his brother, the count of St Poi, reduced them to their duty by force of arms. The holy bishop was exceedingly



mortified at this accident, and out of his own patrimony made amends to everyone, even among the rebels, for all losses they had sustained, which unparalleled charity gained him all their hearts. Though he was judged, by those who were best acquainted with his interior, during his whole life never to have stained his baptismal innocence by any mortal sin, he had so high an idea of the purity in which a soul ought always to appear in the Divine presence, especially when she approaches the holy mysteries, that he went every day to confession with extraordinary compunction and bewailed the least imperfections with many tears. The very shadow of the least sloth or failing in any action affrighted him. In the year 1384, Clement VII, soon after he had nominated him bishop, created him cardinal under the title of St George, and in 1386 called him to Avignon and obliged him to reside there, near his person. Peter continued all his former austerities in the midst of a court, till Clement commanded him to mitigate them for the sake of his health, which seemed to be in a declining condition. His answer was: "Holy Father, I shall always be an unprofitable servant, but I can at least obey." He desired to compensate for what he lost in the practices of penance by redoubling his alms-deeds. By his excessive charities his purse was always empty; his table was most frugal, his family very small, his furniture mean, and his clothes poor, and these he never changed till they were worn out. It seemed that he could not increase his alms, yet he found means to do it by distributing his little furniture and his equipage among the indigent, and selling for them the episcopal ring which he wore on his finger. Everything about him breathed an extraordinary spirit of poverty and published his affection for the poor. At his death his whole treasure amounted only to twenty pence. In all his actions he seemed attentive only to God; and he fell into raptures sometimes in the street, or whilst he waited on the pope at court. An ancient picture of the saint is kept in the collegiate Church of Our Lady at Autun, in which he is painted in an ecstasy, and in which are written these words which he was accustomed frequently to repeat: "Contempt of the world, contempt of thyself: rejoice in thy own contempt, but despise no other person."

Ten months after his promotion to the dignity of cardinal, the saint was seized with a sharp fever, which so much undermined his constitution that his imperfect recovery was succeeded by a dangerous slow fever. For his health he was advised to retire to Villeneuve, an agreeable town situate opposite to Avignon, on the other side of the Rhone. He was glad by this opportunity to see himself removed from the noise and hurry of the court. During his last illness he went to confession twice every day; never passed a day without receiving the holy communion; and the constant union of his soul with God, and the tenderness of his devotion, seemed continually to increase as he drew near his end. His brother

Andrew coming to see him, the saint spoke to him with such energy on the vanity of the world, and on the advantages of piety, that his words left a deep impression on his heart during his whole life. This brother, afterwards taking holy orders, was made Bishop of Cambray, and became one of the most holy prelates of that age. Our saint recommended to him in particular his sister Jane of Luxemburg, whom he had induced to make a vow of perpetual chastity, and whose whole life was a perfect pattern of Christian perfection. St Peter sent her by this brother a small treatise containing certain rules of perfection which he had drawn up for her. Finding his strength quite exhausted, he desired and received the last sacraments; after which he called all his servants, and as they stood weeping round his bed he begged their pardon for not having edified them by his example as he ought to have done. He then conjured them all to promise to do for his sake one thing which he was going to ask of them. To this they most readily engaged themselves. But they were much surprised when he ordered them to take a discipline which lay under his pillow, and everyone to give him many stripes on his back, in punishment for the faults he had committed in regard to them, who were, as he said, his brethren in Christ and his masters. Notwithstanding their extreme unwillingness, they were obliged to comply with his request in order to satisfy him. After this act of penance and humiliation, he conversed with God in silent prayer till he gave up his innocent soul into his hands on the 2nd of July 1387, being eighteen years old, wanting eighteen days. Though he had the administration of a diocese, he had not received priestly orders, but seems to have been deacon, and his dalmatic is shown at Avignon. He was buried without pomp, according to his orders, in the churchyard of St Michael.

On account of many miracles that were wrought both before and after his interment, the citizens of Avignon built a rich chapel over his grave. The convent and church of the Celestines have been since built over that very spot, and in this church is the saint's body at present enshrined under a stately mausoleum. The history of the miracles which have been wrought at his tomb fills whole volumes. A famous one in 1432 moved the city of Avignon to choose him for its patron. It is related as follows. A child about twelve years old fell from a high tower in the palace of Avignon upon a sharp rock, by which fall his skull was split, his brains dashed out, and his body terribly bruised. The father of the child, almost distracted at this accident, ran to the place, and falling on his knees with many tears, implored the intercession of St Peter. Then gathering up the scattered bloody pieces of the child's skull, he carried them with the body in a sack, and laid them on the saint's tomb. The people and the Celestine monks joined their earnest prayers; and after some time the child returned to life, and was placed upon the altar that

all might see him thus wonderfully raised from the dead. This miracle happened on the 5th of July, on which day the festival of the saint has ever since been celebrated at Avignon. After juridical informations on his life and miracles, the bull of his beatification was published by the true Pope Clement VII of the family of Medicis in 1527.

St Peter was a saint from the cradle, because he always strove to live only for God and his divine honour. If one spark of that ardent love of God which inflamed the saints in their actions animated our breasts, it would give wings to our souls in all we do. We should devote ourselves every moment to God with our whole strength; and by our fidelity, and by the purity and fervour of our intention, we should with the saints make all our actions perfect sacrifices of our hearts to him. "God considers not how much, but with how ardent an affection the thing is given," says St Cyprian. And, as St Ambrose writes, "Thy affection stamps the name and value on thy action. It is just rated at so much as is the ardour from which it proceeds. See how just is this judge—He asks thy own soul what value he is to set on thy work."

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 5 :*

ST ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA, founder of the Barnabites in Italy in the sixteenth century : ST EDANA OF EDAENA, virgin, in Ireland, where a famous holy well bears her name : ST MODWENA, a noble Irish virgin who came to England and was entrusted by King Ethelwolf with the education of his daughter, Editha : and ST PETER of Luxemburg, Cardinal Bishop of Metz.

## JULY 6

### ST PALLADIUS, BISHOP, CONFESSOR, APOSTLE OF THE SCOTS

(ABOUT THE YEAR 450)

[From St Prosper and other historians, quoted by Usher, *Antiq. Brit. Eccles.* c. 16, pp. 416, 424 ; Keith, *Cat. Episc. Scot.* p. 233 ; and the Bollandists.]

THE name of Palladius shows this saint to have been a Roman, and most authors agree that he was deacon of the church of Rome. At least St Prosper in his chronicle informs us that when Agricola, a noted Pelagian, had corrupted the churches of Britain with the insinuation of that pestilential heresy, Pope Celestine, at the instance of Palladius the deacon, in 429 sent thither St Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, in quality of his legate who, having ejected the heretics, brought back the Britons to the Catholic faith. The concern of Palladius for these islands stopped not here; for it seems not to be doubted but it was the same person of whom St Prosper again speaks when he afterwards says that in 431 Pope Celestine sent Palladius, the first bishop, to the Scots then believing in Christ. From the lives of SS. Albeus, Declan, Ibar, and Kieran Saigir, Usher shows<sup>1</sup> that these

<sup>1</sup> *Antiq. Brit. Eccl.* c. 16, pp. 408, 412.

four saints preached separately in different parts of Ireland, which was their native country, before the mission of St Patrick. St Ibar had been converted to the faith in Britain; the other three had been instructed at Rome and were directed thence back into their own country, and, according to the histories of their lives, were all honoured with the episcopal character. St Kieran Saigir (who is commemorated on the 5th of March) preceded St Patrick in preaching the gospel to the Ossorians, and was seventy-five years of age on St Patrick's arrival in Ireland. Hence it is easy to understand what is said of St Palladius, that he was sent bishop to the Scots believing in Christ: though the number of Christians among them must have been then very small. St Prosper, in his book against the *Author of the conferences*,<sup>1</sup> having commended Pope Celestine for his care in delivering Britain from the Pelagian heresy, adds that "he also ordained a bishop for the Scots, and thus whilst he endeavoured to preserve the Roman island *Catholic*, he likewise made a barbarous island *Christian*." Usher observes that this can be understood only of Ireland; for though part of North Britain was never subject to the Romans and the greatest part of it was then inhabited by the Picts, yet it never could be called a distinct island. It is also clear from Tertullian, Eusebius, St Chrysostom, and others that the light of the gospel had penetrated among the Picts beyond the Roman territories in Britain near the times of the apostles. These people, therefore, who had lately begun to receive some tincture of the faith when our saint undertook his mission, were doubtless the Scots who were settled in Ireland.

The Irish writers of the lives of St Patrick say that St Palladius had preached in Ireland a little before St Patrick, but that he was soon banished by the King of Leinster, and returned to North Britain where they tell us he had first opened his mission. It seems not to be doubted but he was sent to the whole nation of the Scots, several colonies of whom had passed from Ireland into North Britain, and possessed themselves of part of the country since called Scotland. After St Palladius had left Ireland, he arrived among the Scots in North Britain, according to St Prosper, in the consulate of Bassus and Antiochus, in the year of Christ 431.<sup>2</sup> He preached there with great zeal and formed a considerable church. The Scottish historians tell us that the faith was planted in North Britain about the year 200, in the time of King Donald, when Victor was pope of Rome; but they all acknowledge that Palladius was the first bishop in that country, and style him their first apostle. The saint died at Fordun, the capital town of the little county of Mernis, fifteen miles from Aberdeen to the south, about the year 450. His relics were preserved with religious respect in the monastery of Fordun, as Hector Boetius<sup>3</sup> and Camden testify. In the year 1409 William Scenes, Archbishop of St Andrews and primate of

<sup>1</sup> Prosper. Contra Collat. c. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Usher, p. 418.

<sup>3</sup> Hect. Boet. lib. vii. fol. 128.

Scotland, enclosed them in a new shrine enriched with gold and precious stones. His festival is marked on the 6th of July in the breviary of Aberdeen and the Scottish calendars; but in some of the English on the 15th of December. Scottish writers, and calendars of the middle ages, mention St Servanus and St Ternan as disciples of St Palladius, and by him made bishops, the former of Orkney, the latter of the Picts. But from Usher's chronology it appears that they both lived later.

St Palladius surmounted every obstacle which a fierce nation had opposed to the establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Ought not our hearts to be impressed with the most lively sentiments of love and gratitude to our merciful God for having raised up such great and zealous men, by whose ministry the light of true faith has been conveyed to us.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 6 :*

ST GOAR, priest in Triers, was esteemed the oracle of the whole country : ST JULIAN, anchorite, carried captive when very young and sold as a slave in Syria : ST LAURENCE OF BRINDISI : ST MONINNA, of Mount Culien, where she lived a holy life and is still much honoured : ST PALLADIUS, Bishop and Apostle of the Scots : ST SEXBURGH, Abbess, a niece of St Hilda : and ST THOMAS MORE, martyr.

## JULY 7

### ST PANTÆNUS, FATHER OF THE CHURCH

[See St Jerom, Catal. Clem. Alex. and Eusebius. Also Ceillier, t. ii. p. 237.]

THIS learned father and apostolic man flourished in the second age. He was by birth a Sicilian, by profession a stoic philosopher. For his eloquence he is styled by St Clement of Alexandria the Sicilian Bee. His esteem for virtue led him into an acquaintance with the Christians, and being charmed with the innocence and sanctity of their conversation he opened his eyes to the truth. He studied the holy scriptures under the disciples of the apostles, and his thirst after sacred learning brought him to Alexandria in Egypt, where the disciples of St Mark had instituted a celebrated school of the Christian doctrine. Pantænus sought not to display his talents in that great mart of literature and commerce; but his great progress in sacred learning was after some time discovered, and he was drawn out of that obscurity in which his humility sought to live buried. Being placed at the head of the Christian school some time before the year 179, which was the first of Commodus, by his learning and excellent manner of teaching he raised its reputation above all the schools of the philosophers, and the lessons which he read, and which were gathered from the flowers of the prophets and apostles, conveyed light and knowledge into the minds of all his hearers, as St Clement of Alexandria, his eminent scholar, says of him. The Indians who traded to Alexandria entreated him to pay their country a visit, in order to confute their

Brachmans. Hereupon he forsook his school and was established by Demetrius, who was made Bishop of Alexandria in 189, preacher of the gospel to the Eastern nations. Eusebius tells us that St Pantænus found some seeds of the faith already sown in the Indies, and a book of the gospel of St Matthew in Hebrew, which St Bartholomew had carried thither. He brought it back with him to Alexandria, whither he returned after he had zealously employed some years in instructing the Indians in the faith. The public school was at that time governed by St Clement, but St Pantænus continued to teach in private till, in the reign of Caracalla, consequently before the year 216, he closed a noble and excellent life by a happy death, as Rufinus writes.<sup>1</sup> His name is inserted in all Western Martyrologies on the 7th of July.

The beauty of the Christian morality and the sanctity of its faithful professors, which by their charms converted this true philosopher, appear nowhere to greater advantage than when they are compared with the imperfect and often false virtue of the most famous sages of the heathen world. Into what contradictions and gross errors did they fall, even about the divinity itself and the sovereign good! To how many vices did they give the name of virtues! How many crimes did they canonize! It is true they showed indeed a zeal for justice, a contempt of riches and pleasures, moderation in prosperity, patience in adversities, generosity, courage, and disinterestedness. But these were rather shadows and phantoms than real virtues if they sprang from a principle of vanity and pride, or were infected with the poison of interestedness or any other vitiated intention, which they often betrayed, nay, sometimes openly avowed and made a subject of their vain boasts.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 7 :*

ST BENEDICT XI, Pope, born in 1220, a native of Treviso, then an independent commonwealth : ST CYRIL and ST METHODIUS, Bishops, Apostles of Moravia, Bohemia and other Slavonic countries, in the ninth century : ST EDELBURGA, a daughter of the King of the East Angles, went to France and there consecrated herself to God : ST FELIX, one of the most illustrious of the Bishops of Nantes : ST HEDDA, a monk of the monastery of St Hilda, made Bishop of the West Saxons in 676 : ST PANTÆNUS, Father of the Church : ST WILLIBALD, Archbishop of Aichstadt, born in his father's kingdom of the West Saxons, about the place where Southampton now stands.

## JULY 8

### ST WITHBURGE, VIRGIN

SHE was the youngest of the four sisters, all saints, daughters of Annas, the holy King of the East-Angles. In her tender years she devoted herself to the divine service, and led an austere life in close solicitude for several years at Holkham, an estate of the king her father, near the sea coast in Norfolk, where a church, afterwards called Withburgstow, was

<sup>1</sup> Rufin. b. v. c. 10.

built. After the death of her father she changed her dwelling to another estate of the crown, called Dereham. This is at present a considerable market-town in Norfolk, but was then an obscure retired place. Withburge assembled there many devout virgins, and laid the foundation of a great church and nunnery, but did not live to finish the buildings. Her death happened on the 17th of March 743. Her body was interred in the churchyard at Dereham, and fifty-five years after found uncorrupt and translated into the church. One hundred and seventy-six years after this, in 974, Brithnoth (the first abbot of Ely, after that house, which had been destroyed by the Danes, was rebuilt), with the consent of King Edgar, removed it to Ely, and deposited it near the bodies of her two sisters. In 1106 the remains of four saints were translated into the new church and laid near the high altar. The bodies of SS. Sexburga and Ermenilda were reduced to dust, except the bones. That of St Audry was entire, and that of St Withburge was not only sound, but also fresh, and the limbs perfectly flexible. Warner, a monk of Westminster, showed this to all the people by lifting up and moving several ways the hands, arms, and feet. Herbert, Bishop of Thetford, who in 1094 translated his see to Norwich, and many other persons of distinction were eye-witnesses hereof. This is related by Thomas, monk of Ely, in his history of Ely,<sup>1</sup> which he wrote the year following, 1107. This author tells us that in the place where St Withburge was first buried, in the churchyard of Dereham, a large fine spring of most clear water gushes forth.<sup>2</sup> It is to this day called St Withburge's well, was formerly very famous, and is paved, covered, and inclosed; a stream from it forms another small well without the churchyard. See her life, and Leland, Collect. vol. iii. p. 167.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 8 :*

BLESSED SIR ADRIAN FORTESCUE, martyr : ST ELIZABETH, Queen of Portugal, a niece and namesake of St Elizabeth of Hungary : ST GRIMBALT, Abbot, a native of St Omer, the first professor of divinity at Oxford : ST KILIAN, Bishop, OLMAN, priest, and TOTNAM, deacon, martyrs : ST PROCOPIUS, martyr, a native of Jerusalem, a reader and exorcist; his acts say he was "a divine man" and was well skilled in the sciences of the Greeks, but much more in Holy Scripture : BLESSED THEOBALD, Abbot, the great ornament of the illustrious family of Montmorency : and ST WITHBURGA, virgin, the youngest of four sisters, all of whom became saints.

## JULY 9

### ST EPHREM OF EDESSA, CONFESSOR, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

(A.D. 378)

[From his works in the late Vatican edition; also from St Gregory of Nyssa, in his panegyric of St Ephrem; and from Palladius, Theodoret, Sozomen, &c. See t. i. Op. St Ephrem, Romæ, an. 1743; or St Ephrem, Syri Opera Omani Latine. Venetiæ, 1755, 2 tomiis.]

THIS humble deacon was the most illustrious of all the doctors who, by their doctrine and writings, have adorned the Syriac church. He was

<sup>1</sup> Anglia Sacra, t. i. p. 613, published by Wharton.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. p. 606.

born in the territory of Nisibis, a strong city on the banks of the Tigris, in Mesopotamia. His parents lived in the country and earned their bread with the sweat of their brows, but were ennobled by the blood of martyrs in their family, and had themselves both confessed Christ before the persecutors under Diocletian or his successors. They consecrated Ephrem to God from his cradle, like another Samuel, but he was eighteen years old when he was baptized. Before that time he had committed certain faults which his enlightened conscience extremely exaggerated to him after his perfect conversion to God, and he never ceased to bewail, with floods of tears, his ingratitude towards God in having ever offended him. Sozomen<sup>1</sup> says these sins were little sallies of anger, into which he had sometimes fallen with his playfellows in his childhood. The saint himself mentions in his confession<sup>2</sup> two crimes (as he styles them) of this age, which called for his tears during his whole life. The first was, that in play he had driven a neighbour's cow among the mountains, where it happened to be killed by a wild beast; the second was a doubt which once came into his mind in his childhood, whether God's particular providence reached to an immediate superintendency over all our individual actions. This sin he exceedingly magnifies in his contrition, though it happened before his baptism, and never proceeded further than a fluctuating thought from ignorance in his childhood; and in his Testament he thanks God for having been always preserved by his mercy since his baptism from any error in faith. Himself assures us that the divine goodness was pleased in a wonderful manner to discover to him, after this temptation, the folly of his error, and the wretched blindness of his soul in having pretended to fathom the secrets of providence.

St Ephrem, from the time of his baptism, began to be more deeply penetrated with the fear of the divine judgment, and he had always present to his mind the rigorous account he was to give to God of all his actions, the remembrance of which was to him a source of almost uninterrupted tears. Hoping more easily to secure his salvation in a state in which his thoughts would never be diverted from it, soon after he was baptized he took the monastic habit and put himself under the direction of a holy abbot, with whose leave he chose for his abode a little hermitage in the neighbourhood of the monastery. He seemed to set no bounds to his fervour. He lay on the bare ground, often fasted whole days without eating, and watched a great part of the night in prayer. It was a rule observed in all the monasteries of Mesopotamia and Egypt that every religious man should perform his task of manual labour, of which he gave an account to his superior at the end of every week. The work of these monks was always painful, that it might be a part of their penance; and it was such as was compatible with private prayer and a constant attention

<sup>1</sup> Sozom. lib. iii. c. 16.

<sup>2</sup> T. iii. p. 23.



of the mind to God; for they always prayed or meditated at their work; and for this purpose, the first task which was enjoined a young monk was to get the psalter by heart. The profits of their labour, above the little pittance which was necessary for their mean subsistence in their penitential state, were always given to the poor. St Ephrem made sails for ships. Of his poverty he writes thus in his Testament: "Ephrem hath never possessed purse, staff, or scrip, or any other temporal estate; my heart hath known no affection for gold or silver or any earthly goods." He was naturally choleric, but so perfectly did he subdue this passion that meekness was one of the most conspicuous virtues in his character, and he was usually styled *The meek, or the peaceable man of God*. He was never known to dispute or contend with anyone; with the most obstinate sinners he used only tears and entreaties. Once, when he had fasted several days, the brother who was bringing him a mess of pottage made with a few herbs for his meal let fall the pot and broke it. The saint, seeing him in confusion, said cheerfully, "As our supper will not come to us, let us go to it." And sitting down on the ground by the broken pot, he picked up his meal as well as he could. Humility made the saint rejoice in the contempt of himself, and sincerely desire that all men had such a knowledge and opinion of his baseness and nothingness as to despise him from their hearts, and to look upon him most unworthy to hold any rank among creatures. This sincere spirit of profound humility all his words, actions, and writings breathed in a most affecting manner.

Honours and commendations served to increase the saint's humility. Hearing himself one day praised, he was not able to speak, and his whole body was covered with a violent sweat, caused by the inward agony and confusion of his soul at the consideration of the last day; for he was seized with extreme fear and dread, thinking that he should be then overwhelmed with shame, when his baseness and hypocrisy should be proclaimed and made manifest before all creatures, especially those very persons who here commended him and whom he had deceived by his hypocrisy. We may hence easily judge how much the thought of any elevation or honour affrighted him. When a certain city sought to choose him bishop, he counterfeited himself mad.

Compunction of heart is the sister of sincere humility and penance, and nothing seemed more admirable in our saint than this virtue. Tears seemed always ready to be called forth in torrents as often as he raised his heart to God, or remembered the sweetness of his divine love, the rigour of his judgments, or the spiritual miseries of our souls. No one could meet him at any time who did not see them trickling down his cheeks. He appeared always drowned in an abyss of compunction.

St Gregory of Nyssa writes that no one can read his discourses on the last judgment without dissolving into tears, so awful is the representation,

and so strong and lively the image which he paints of that dreadful day. Almost every object he saw called it afresh to his mind. The spotless purity of our saint was the fruit of his sincere humility and constant watchfulness over himself. He says that the great St Antony, out of modesty, would never wash his feet, or suffer any part of his body, except his face and hands, to be seen naked by anyone.

St Ephrem spent many years in the desert, collected within himself, having his mind raised above all earthly things, and living as it were out of the flesh, and out of the world, to use the expression of St Gregory Nazianzen. His zeal drew several severe persecutions upon him from certain tepid monks, but he found a great support in the example and advice of St Julian, whose life he has written. He lost this comfort by the death of that great servant of God; and about the same time died in 338 (not 350 as Tillemont mistakes) St James, Bishop of Nisibis, his spiritual director and patron. Not long after this, God inspired St Ephrem to leave his own country and go to Edessa, there to venerate the relics of the saints, by which are probably meant chiefly those of the apostle St Thomas. He likewise desired to enjoy the conversation of certain holy anchorets who inhabited the mountains near that city, which was sometimes reckoned in Mesopotamia and sometimes in Syria. Under the weak reigns of the last of the Seleucidæ, kings of Asia, it was erected into a small kingdom by the princes called Abgars. As the saint was going into Edessa, a certain courtesan fixed her eyes upon him, which when he perceived he turned away his face and said with indignation, "Why dost thou gaze upon me?" To which she made this smart reply: "Woman was formed from man; but you ought always to keep your eyes cast down on the earth, out of which man was framed." St Ephrem, whose heart was always filled with the most profound sentiments of humility, was much struck and pleased with this reflection, and admired the providence of God which sends us admonitions by all sorts of means. He wrote a book on those words of the courtesan, which the Syrians anciently esteemed the most useful and best of all the writings of this incomparable doctor, but it is now lost. It seems to have contained maxims of humility.

St Ephrem lived at Edessa, highly honoured by all ranks and orders of men. Being ordained deacon of that church, he became an apostle of penance, which he preached with incredible zeal and fruit. He from time to time returned into his desert, there to renew in his heart the spirit of compunction and prayer; but always came out of his wilderness inflamed with the ardour of a Baptist, to announce the divine truths to a world buried in spiritual darkness and insensibility. The saint was endued with great natural talents, which he had improved by study and contemplation. He was a poet and had read something of logic; but had no tincture of the rest of the Grecian philosophy. This want of the heathenish learn-

ing and profane science was supplied by his good sense and uncommon penetration, and the diligence with which he cultivated his faculties by more sublime sacred studies. He learned very accurately the doctrines of the Catholic faith, was well versed in the holy scriptures, and was a perfect master of the Syriac tongue, in which he wrote with great elegance and propriety. He was possessed of an extraordinary faculty of natural eloquence. Words flowed from him like a torrent, which yet were too slow for the impetuosity and multitude of thoughts with which he was overwhelmed in speaking on spiritual subjects. His conceptions were always clear, his diction pure and agreeable. He spoke with admirable perspicuity, copiousness, and sententiousness, in an easy unaffected style, and with so much sweetness, so pathetic a vehemence, so natural an accent, and so strong emotions of his own heart, that his words seemed to carry with them an irresistible power. His writings derive great strength from the genius and natural bold tropes of the Oriental languages applied by so great a master, and have a graceful beauty and force which no translation can attain; though his works are only impetuous effusions of an overflowing heart, not studied compositions. What recommends them beyond all other advantages of eloquence is they are all the language of the heart, and a heart penetrated with the most perfect sentiments of divine love, confidence, compunction, humility, and all other virtues. They present his ardent, humble, and meek soul such as it was, and show how ardently he was occupied only on the great truths of salvation; how much he humbled himself without intermission, under the almighty hand of God, infinite in sanctity and terrible in his justice; with what profound awe he trembled in the constant attention to his adorable presence, and at the remembrance of his dreadful judgment, and with what fervour he both preached and practised the most austere penance, labouring continually with all his strength "to prepare himself a treasure for the last hour," as he expresses himself. "Who that is proud," says St Gregory of Nyssa, "would not become the humblest of men by reading his discourse on humility? Who would not be inflamed with the divine fire by reading his treatise on charity? Who could not wish to be chaste in heart and spirit by reading the praises he has given to virginity?"

The saint, though most austere to himself, was discreet in the direction of others, and often repeated this advice, that it is a dangerous stratagem of the enemy to induce fervent converts to embrace in the beginning excessive mortifications.<sup>1</sup>

St Ephrem brought many idolaters to the faith, and converted great numbers of Arians, Sabellians, and other heretics. St Jerom commends a book which he wrote against the Macedonians, to prove the divinity of the Holy Ghost. He established the perfect efficacy of penance against

<sup>1</sup> Serm. Ascetic. 1, p. 4.

the Novatians, who, though the boldest and most insolent of men, seemed like children without strength before this experienced champion, as St Gregory of Nyssa assures us. Not less glorious were his triumphs over the Millenarians, Marcionites, Manichees, and the disciples of the impious Bardesanes, who denied the resurrection of the flesh, and had in the foregoing century spread his errors at Edessa by songs which the people learned to sing. St Ephrem, to minister a proper antidote against this poison, composed elegant Catholic songs and poems which he taught the inhabitants both of the city and country with great spiritual advantage. Apollinaris began openly to broach his heresy a little before the year 376, denying in Christ a human soul, which he pretended that the divine person supplied in the humanity: whence it would have followed that he was not truly man, but only assumed a human body, not the complete human nature. St Ephrem was then very old, but he opposed this new monster with great vigour. Several heresies he crushed in their birth, and he suffered much from the fury of the Arians under Constantius, and of the heathens under Julian, but in both these persecutions reaped glorious laurels and trophies.

It was by a divine admonition, as himself assures us,<sup>1</sup> that about the year 372 he undertook a long journey to pay a visit to Basil. Being arrived at Cæsarea he went to the great church, where he found the holy bishop preaching. After the sermon, St Basil sent for him and asked him by an interpreter if he was not Ephrem the servant of Christ. "I am that Ephrem," said he, "who have wandered astray from the path of heaven." Then melting into tears, and raising his voice, he cried out, "O my father, have pity on a sinful wretch, and lead me into the narrow path." St Basil gave him many rules of holy life, and after long spiritual conferences dismissed him with great esteem, having first ordained his companion priest. St Ephrem himself never would consent to be promoted to the sacerdotal dignity, of which he expresses the greatest dread and apprehension, in his sermon on the priesthood.<sup>2</sup> Being returned to Edessa he retired to a little solitary cell, where he prepared himself for his last passage, and composed the latter part of his works. For, not content to labour for the advantage of one age or one people, he studied to promote that of all mankind, and all times to come. The public distress under a great famine called him again out of his retirement in order to serve and procure relief for the poor. He engaged the rich freely to open their coffers, placed beds for the sick in all the public porticos, visited them every day, and served them with his own hands. The public calamity being over, he hastened back to his solitude, where he shortly after sickened of a fever. He wrote about that time his seventy-six Paræneses or moving exhortations to penance, consisting in a great measure of most effective

<sup>1</sup> In encomio Basilij, t. ii.

<sup>2</sup> T. iv. b. i. ed. Vaticanæ.

prayers, several of which are used by the Syrians in their church office. His confidence in the precious fruits of the holy sacrament of the altar raised his hope and inflamed his love, especially in his passage to eternity. Thus he expresses himself:<sup>1</sup> "Entering upon so long and dangerous a journey I have my viaticum, even Thee, O Son of God. In my extreme spiritual hunger I will feed on thee, the repairer of mankind. So it shall be that no fire will dare to approach me; for it will not be able to bear the sweet saving odour of thy body and blood." The circumstances of our saint's death are edifying, and deserve our notice; for nothing more strongly affects our heart, or makes on it a more sensible impression, than the behaviour and words of great men in their last moments.

St Ephrem was always filled with grief, indignation, and confusion when he perceived others to treat him as a saint, or to express any regard or esteem for him. In his last sickness he laid this strict injunction on his disciples and friends:<sup>2</sup> "Sing no funeral hymns at Ephrem's burial; suffer no encomiastic oration. Wrap not my carcase in any costly shroud: erect no monument to my memory. Allow me only the portion and place of a pilgrim; for I am a pilgrim and a stranger as all my fathers were on earth." Seeing that several persons had prepared rich shrouds for his interment, he was much afflicted, and he charged all those who had such a design to drop it and give the money to the poor, which he in particular obliged a rich nobleman who had bought a most sumptuous shroud for that purpose to do. St Ephrem, as long as he was able to speak, continued to exhort all men to the fervent pursuit of virtue, as his last words sufficiently show, says St Gregory of Nyssa, meaning the saint's Testament, which is still extant genuine, and the same that was quoted by St Gregory, Sozomen, &c. In it he says: "I, Ephrem, die. Be it known to you all that I write this Testament to conjure you always to remember me in your prayers after my decease."<sup>3</sup> This he often repeats. He protests that he had always lived in the true faith, to which he exhorts all most firmly to adhere. Deploring and confessing aloud the vanity and sinfulness of his life, he adjures all present that no one would suffer his sinful dust to be laid under the altar, and that no one would take any of his rags for relics, nor show him any honour, for he was a sinner and the last of creatures. "But," says he, "throw my body hastily on your shoulders, and cast me into my grave as the abomination of the universe. Let no one praise me; for I am full of confusion and the very abstract of baseness. To show what I am, rather spit upon me, and cover my body with phlegm. Did you smell the stench of my actions, you would fly from me and leave me unburied, not being able to bear the horrible corruption of my sins." He

<sup>1</sup> Necrosima, can. 81, p. 355, t. vi.

<sup>2</sup> St Ephrem in Testam. pp. 286, 395, and St Greg. Nyss. p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Testam. t. ii. p. 230, &c.

forbids any torches or perfumes, ordering his corpse to be thrown into the common burying place among poor strangers. He expressed most feeling sentiments of compunction, and gives his blessing to his disciples with a prediction of divine mercy in their favour; but excepts two among them, Aruad and Paulonas, both persons famed for eloquence; yet he foresaw that they would afterwards apostatize from the Catholic faith. The whole city was assembled before the saint's door, everyone being bathed in tears; and all strove to get as near to him as possible, and to listen to his last instructions. A lady of great quality named Lamprotata, falling at his feet, begged his leave to buy a coffin for his interment; to which he assented, on condition that it should be a very mean one, and that the lady would promise to renounce all vanities in a spirit of penance, and never again to be carried on the shoulders of men, or in a chair; all which she cheerfully engaged herself to perform. The saint having ceased to speak continued in silent prayer till he calmly gave up his soul to God. He died in a very advanced age about the year 378. His festival was kept at Edessa immediately after his death. On it St Gregory of Nyssa soon after spoke his panegyric at the request of one Ephrem, who, having been taken captive by the Ishmaelites, had recommended himself to this saint his patron, and had been wonderfully delivered from his chains and from many dangers. St Gregory closes his discourse with this address to the saint: "You are now assisting at the divine altar, and before the Prince of life with the angels, praising the most holy Trinity: remember us all, and obtain for us the pardon of our sins." The true Martyrology of Bede calls the 9th of July the day of his deposition; which agrees with Palladius, who places his death in harvest-time, though the Latins have long kept his festival on the 1st of February, and the Greeks on the 28th of January. His perpetual tears, far from disfiguring his face, made it appear more serene and beautiful, and his very aspect raised the veneration of all who beheld him. The Greeks paint him very tall, bent with old age, of a sweet and beautiful countenance, with his eyes swimming in tears, and the venerable marks of sanctity in his looks and habit.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 9 :*

ST EPHREM, Doctor of the Church, 378 : ST EVERILDIS, who trained up many other virgins to the perfection of the Divine love : THE HOLY MARTYRS OF GORCUM, nineteen priests and religious men, taken by the Calvinists and hanged, on account of their religion, at Bril, on this date in 1572 ; eleven were Franciscan friars called Recollects, one a Dominican, two Norbertins, and one a Canon Regular of Austin, three curates, and one secular priest : and ST VERONICA DE JULIANIS, virgin.

JULY 10

THE SEVEN BROTHERS, MARTYRS, AND ST FELICITAS,  
THEIR MOTHER  
(IN THE SECOND CENTURY)

[From their genuine acts in Ruinart, and Tillemont, t. ii. See the remarks of Pinius the Bollandist, t. iii. Julij, p. 5.]

THE illustrious martyrdom of these saints has been justly celebrated by the holy fathers. It happened at Rome under the Emperor Antoninus, that is, according to several ancient copies of the acts, Antoninus Pius. The seven brothers were the sons of St Felicitas, a noble pious Christian widow in Rome, who brought them up in the most perfect sentiments and practice of heroic virtue. After the death of her husband she served God in a state of continency, and employed herself wholly in prayer, fasting, and works of charity. By the public and edifying example of this lady and her whole family, many idolaters were moved to renounce the worship of their false gods and to embrace the faith of Christ, which Christians were likewise encouraged, by so illustrious a pattern, openly to profess. This raised the spleen of the heathenish priests, who complained to the Emperor Antoninus that the boldness with which Felicitas publicly practised the Christian religion drew many from the worship of the immortal gods who were the guardians and protectors of the empire, and that it was a continual insult on them; who, on that account, were extremely offended and angry with the city and whole state. They added, that in order to appease them it was necessary to compel this lady and her children to sacrifice to them. Antoninus being himself superstitious, was prevailed upon by this remonstrance to send an order to Publius, the prefect of Rome, to take care that the priests should be satisfied and the gods appeased in this matter. Publius caused the mother and her sons to be apprehended and brought before him. When this was done he took Felicitas aside, and used the strongest inducements to bring her freely to sacrifice to the gods, that he might not be obliged to proceed with severity against her and her sons; but she returned him this answer: "Do not think to frighten me by threats, or to win me by fair speeches. The Spirit of God within me will not suffer me to be overcome by Satan, and will make me victorious over all your assaults." Publius said in a great rage, "Unhappy woman, is it possible you should think death so desirable as not to permit even your children to live, but force me to destroy them by the most cruel torments?" "My children," said she, "will live eternally with Christ if they are faithful to him; but must expect eternal death if they sacrifice to idols." The next day the prefect, sitting in the square of Mars, before his temple, sent for Felicitas and her sons, and addressing his speech to her, said, "Take pity of your children, Felicitas;

they are in the bloom of youth, and may aspire to the greatest honours and preferments." The holy mother answered, "Your pity is really impiety, and the compassion to which you exhort me would make me the most cruel of mothers." Then turning herself towards her children, she said to them, "My sons, look up to heaven, where Jesus Christ with his saints expects you. Be faithful in his love, and fight courageously for your souls." Publius, being exasperated at this behaviour, commanded her to be cruelly buffeted, saying, "You are insolent indeed to give them such advice as this in my presence, in contempt of the orders of our princes."

The judge then called the children to him one after another, and used many artful speeches, mingling promises with threats to induce them to adore the gods. Januarius, the eldest, experienced his assaults the first, but resolutely answered him, "You advise me to do a thing that is very foolish and contrary to all reason; but I confide in my Lord Jesus Christ, that he will preserve me from such an impiety." Publius ordered him to be stripped and cruelly scourged, after which he sent him back to prison. Felix, the second brother, was called next and commanded to sacrifice. But the generous youth replied, "There is one only God. To him we offer the sacrifice of our hearts. We will never forsake the love which we owe to Jesus Christ. Employ all your artifices, exhaust all inventions of cruelty, you will never be able to overcome our faith." The other brothers made their answers separately, that they feared not a passing death but everlasting torments; and that having before their eyes the immortal recompenses of the just, they despised the threats of men. Martialis, who spoke last, said, "All who do not confess Christ to be the true God shall be cast into eternal flames." The brothers, after being whipped, were remanded to prison, and the prefect, despairing to be able ever to overcome their resolution, laid the whole process before the emperor. Antoninus, having read the interrogatory, gave an order that they should be sent to different judges and be condemned to different deaths. Januarius was scourged to death with whips loaded with plummets of lead. The two next, Felix and Philip, were beaten with clubs till they expired. Sylvanus, the fourth, was thrown headlong down a steep precipice. The three youngest, Alexander, Vitalis, and Martialis, were beheaded, and the same sentence was executed upon the mother four months after. St Felicitas is commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on the 23rd of November; the sons on the 10th of July, on which day their festival is marked in the Old Roman Calendar, published by Bucherius.<sup>1</sup>

St Gregory the Great delivered his third homily on the Gospels, on the festival of St Felicitas, in the church built over her tomb on the Salarian road. In this discourse he says that this saint, "having seven children, was as much afraid of leaving them behind her on earth as other mothers

<sup>1</sup> In *Cyclus Pasch.* p. 268.



are of surviving theirs. She was more than a martyr, for seeing her seven dear children martyred before her eyes, she was in some sort a martyr in each of them. She was the eighth in the order of time, but was from the first to the last in pain, and began her martyrdom in the eldest, which she only finished in her own death. She received a crown not only for herself, but likewise for all her children. Seeing them in torments she remained constant, feeling their pains by nature as their mother, but rejoicing for them in her heart by hope." The same father takes notice how weak faith is in us: in her it was victorious over flesh and blood; but in us is not able to check the sallies of our passions, or wean our hearts from a wicked and deceitful world. "Let us be covered with shame and confusion," says he, "that we should fall so far short of the virtue of this martyr, and should suffer our passions still to triumph over faith in our hearts. Often one word spoken against us disturbs our minds; at the least blast of contradiction we are discouraged or provoked; but neither torments nor death were able to shake her courageous soul. We weep without ceasing when God requires of us the children he hath lent us; and she bewailed her children when they did not die for Christ, and rejoiced when she saw them die." What afflictions do parents daily meet with from the disorders into which their children fall through their own bad example or neglect! Let them imitate the earnestness of St Felicitas in forming to perfect virtue the tender souls which God hath committed to their charge, and with this saint they will have the greatest of all comforts in them; and will by his grace count as many saints in their family as they are blessed with children.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 10 :*

THE SEVEN BROTHERS and St FELICITAS, their mother, martyrs in the second century; their illustrious martyrdom has been justly celebrated by the holy fathers: St RUFINA and St SECUNDA, two sisters, martyrs in Rome, condemned to lose their heads when they refused to follow the example of the apostates to whom their father had promised them in marriage.

## JULY 11

### ST JAMES, BISHOP OF NISIBIS, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 350)

[From Theodoret, Phil. c. 1, et Hist. lib. i. c. 7. Gennadius, c. 1; Tillemont, t. vii. p. 263; Ceillier, t. iv.; Assemani, Bibl. Orient. t. i. p. 186; Cuper the Bollandist, and the saint's works, published in Armenian and Latin, by Nic. Antonelli, at Rome, in 1755; add the accounts given of this saint in the Menology of the Armenians at Venice, on the seventh day of the month Caghozi, the 15th of our December; in the Synaxary of the Egyptians on the eighteenth of Tobi, our 12th of January, by St Gregory of Naregha, an Armenian Bishop, in 980, author of many devout Armenian orations and prayers. (Orat. 99, in St Jacob. in libro Precum edito Constantinopoli, an. 1700.) Also by Moyses Cheronensis, Histor. Armenæ, lib. iii. art. 7, though this author flourished not in the fifth century (as the Whistons imagine with those who confound him with Moyses the grammarian, who translated the Bible from the Greek and Syriac into the Armenian tongue in the reign of Theodosius the Younger, as Galanus mentions), but after the year 727, in which arose the great schism of which this historian speaks, and of which the patriarch John IV, of Ozaium, was author. See James Villotte, the Jesuit, in Diction. Armen. in Serie Patriarcharum.]

THIS eminent saint and glorious doctor of the Syriac church was a native of Nisibis, in Mesopotamia, which country was then subject to the eastern

empire. He had a genius rich by nature, which he cultivated with indefatigable application; though, after laying a foundation of the sciences, he confined himself to sacred studies. In his youth entering the world, he became soon apprized of its dangers. He saw that in it only ambition, vanity, and voluptuousness reign; that men here usually live in a hurry and a crowd, without finding leisure to look into themselves, or to study that great science which ought to be their only affair. He trembled at the sight of its vices and the slippery path of its pleasures, which, though they seem agreeable at first, yet when tasted are nothing but bitterness and mortal poison, and whilst they flatter the senses, destroy the soul; and he thought it the safer part to conquer by flight, or at least, with the Baptist, to prepare and strengthen himself in retirement, that he might afterwards be the better able to stand his ground in the field. He accordingly chose the highest mountains for his abode, sheltering himself in a cave in the winter, and the rest of the year living in the woods, continually exposed to the open air; and knowing that our greatest conquest is to subdue ourselves, in order to facilitate this important victory he joined to assiduous prayer the practice of great austerities. He lived only on wild roots and herbs, which he ate raw, and had no other garments than a tunic and cloak, both made of goat's hair, very coarse. Notwithstanding his desire to live unknown to men, yet he was discovered, and many were not afraid to climb the rugged rocks that they might recommend themselves to his prayers and receive the comfort of his spiritual advice. He was favoured with the gifts of prophecy and miracles in an uncommon measure, of which he gave several proofs in a journey he took into Persia to visit the new churches that were planting there, and strengthen the young converts labouring under grievous persecutions. His presence fortified them in their good resolutions, and inspired them with that spirit of martyrdom which afterwards showed itself in their glorious triumphs. He converted many idolaters and wrought several miracles in that country. He suffered torments for the faith in the persecution continued by Maximinus II, for Gennadius places him in the number of confessors under that tyrant; and Nicephorus names him among the holy bishops in the council of Nice who bore the glorious marks of their sufferings for Christ. His personal merit and great reputation occasioned his promotion to the see of Nisibis; but here he still followed the same course of life he had inured himself to on the mountains, to his fasts and austerities adding the care of the poor, the correction of sinners, and all the other toils and hardships of episcopacy. Such was his charity for the poor that he seemed to possess nothing but for their relief. In the acts of St Miles and his companions, Persian martyrs, it is related that St James built at Nisibis a very stately church. St Miles coming to that city was astonished at the majesty of the edifice, and having made some stay there with

St James, returned to Adiab, whence he sent the holy bishop a present of a great quantity of silk for the ornaments of his church.

Theodoret relates<sup>1</sup> of him that one day as he was travelling he was accosted by a gang of beggars who had concerted a plot whereby to impose upon the servant of God, with the view of extorting money from him on pretence to bury their companion, who lay stretched on the ground as if he had been dead. The holy man gave them what they asked, and "offering up supplications to God as for a soul departed, he prayed that his divine majesty would pardon him the sins he had committed whilst he lived, and that he would admit him into the company of the saints," says Theodoret. As soon as the saint was gone by, his companions, calling upon him to rise and take his share of the booty, were strangely surprised to find him really dead. Seized with sudden fear and grief, they shrieked in the utmost consternation, and immediately ran after the man of God, cast themselves at his feet, confessed the cheat, begged forgiveness, and by entreaties and mournful looks pleaded for pity, and besought him by his prayers to restore their unhappy companion to life, which the saint performed, as this grave author assures us.

The most famous miracle of our Thaumaturgus was that by which he protected the city of Nisibis from the barbarians, as is related by Theodoret both in his religious and ecclesiastical history; by Theophanes, the Alexandrian Chronicle, and even by Philostorgius himself,<sup>2</sup> who was a rank Arian, cannot be suspected of being too favourable to St James. Sapor II, the haughty King of Persia, twice besieged Nisibis with the whole strength of his empire whilst our saint was bishop; and the city was every time miraculously protected by the prayers of St James. Of these sieges the first was laid soon after the death of Constantine the Great, which happened on the 22nd of May in 337, after that prince had reigned thirty-nine years, nine months, and twenty-seven days. His valour had kept the barbarians in awe. But upon his demise Sapor came, and in 338 sat down before Nisibis with a prodigious army of foot, horse, elephants, and all sorts of warlike engines. But after continuing the siege sixty-three days, was compelled shamefully to raise it and return into Persia; and his army, harassed by the enemy in its march and exhausted by fatigues, was at length destroyed by famine and epidemical diseases. The Emperor Constantius, when the Persians again invaded the territories of the Romans in 348, by his pusillanimity and misconduct gave them a great superiority in the field; and Cosroës, elated with success and enriched by the plunder of many provinces, ventured a second time, with an army still much stronger than before, to lay siege to Nisibis in 350. His troops having seized all the avenues, and made their approaches with a fury beyond example, he first endeavoured to make a breach in the walls by battering-rams and

<sup>1</sup> Philoth. seu Hist. Relig. c. 1, p. 767.

<sup>2</sup> Philost. Hist. lib. iii. c. 23.

mines, but all to no purpose. At length, after seventy days' labour, he caused a dam to be raised at a considerable distance from the city, thereby to stop the river Mygdon, which ran through it; this he ordered to be broke down when the water was at its full height; so that the violence with which it beat against the wall of the city made a wide breach in it. At this the Persians rent the air with loud shouts of joy, but deferred the assault till the next day that the waters might be first carried off, they not being able to make their approaches by reason of the inundation. When they came up to the breach they were strangely surprised to find another wall which the inhabitants had raised behind the former with an astonishing expedition, being encouraged by St James, who remained himself all the time in the church at his prayers, by which he conquered, like Moses on the mountain. Sapor, marching up to the breach in person, fancied he saw a man in royal apparel on the wall, whose purple and diadem cast an uncommon brightness. This person he believed was the Roman Emperor Constantius, and threatened to put to death those who had told him the emperor was at Antioch. But upon their giving him fresh assurances that Constantius was really there, and convinced that heaven fought for the Romans, he threw up a javelin into the air out of impotent revenge because heaven seemed to take part against him. Then St Ephrem, deacon of Edessa and St James's disciple, being present, entreated him to go upon the walls to take a view of the Persians, and pray to God that he would defeat the infidel army. The bishop would not pray for the destruction of anyone, but he implored the divine mercy that the city might be delivered from the calamities of so long a siege. Afterwards, going to the top of a high tower, and turning his face towards the enemy and seeing the prodigious multitude of men and beasts which covered the whole country, he said: "Lord, thou art able by the weakest means to humble the pride of thy enemies; defeat these multitudes by an army of gnats." God heard the humble prayer of his servant, as he had done that of Moses against the Egyptians, and as he had by the like means vanquished the enemies of his people when he conducted them out of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> For scarce had the saint spoke those words when whole clouds of gnats and flies came pouring down upon the Persians, got into the elephants' trunks and the horses' ears and nostrils, which made them chafe and foam, throw their riders, and put the whole army into confusion and disorder. A famine and pestilence which followed carried off a great part of the army; and Sapor, after lying above three months before the place, set fire to all his own engines of war and was forced to abandon the siege and return home with the loss of twenty thousand men. Sapor received a third foil under the walls of Nisibis in 359, upon which he turned his arms against Amidus, took that strong city, and put the garrison and the greatest part of the

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom xvi. 9.

inhabitants to the sword. The citizens of Nisibis attributed their preservation to the intercession of their glorious patron, St James, though he seems to have been translated to glory before this last siege. Gennadius says he died in the reign of Constantius, whose death happened in 361: that of St James is placed by most moderns in 350, soon after the second siege of Nisibis. Gennadius informs us that, out of a pious confidence that the saint's earthly remains would be a pledge of his intercession with God for the protection of the city against the barbarians, by an order of the emperor Constantius, though an Arian, pursuant to an express injunction of his father Constantine the Great, notwithstanding the severe laws to the contrary then in force, the body of St James was buried within the walls of the city. Julian the Apostate, in 361, envying the saint this distinguished privilege, commanded these sacred remains to be removed without the city. Soon after, upon his death, the emperor Jovian in 363, in order to purchase peace of the Persians, was obliged to yield up to them Nisibis, with the five Roman provinces situated on the Tigris, and great part of Mesopotamia. But the inhabitants of Nisibis, who were compelled by Jovian to remove before he delivered up the city, carried with them the sacred relics of this saint, which, according to the Menology of the Armenians at Venice, were brought to Constantinople about the year 970. His name is famous both in the Eastern and Western Martyrologies. His festival is kept by the Latins on the 15th of July, by the Greeks on the 13th of January and the 31st of October, by the Syrians on the 18th of January, and by the Armenians on a Saturday in the month of December. The last honour him with no less solemnity than the Assyrians, and observe before his feast a fast of five days, with the same severity as that of Lent. In his office they sing the long devout Armenian hymns which were compiled in his honour by St Nierses, patriarch of Armenia, the fourth of that name, surnamed of Ghelaia, who strenuously defended the union with the Latin church against the Greek emperor, Michael Comnenus, in the twelfth century, and is honoured by the orthodox Armenians among the saints.

St James's learning and writings have procured him a rank next to St Ephrem among the doctors of the Syriac church; and the Armenians honour him as one of the principal doctors of their national church. For though St James was a Syrian, he wrote excellent treatises in the Armenian language for their instruction, at the request of a holy bishop of that nation called Gregory, whose letter to our saint is still extant. In it he promises himself the happiness of paying St James a visit, and passing some time with him, in order to improve himself more perfectly by his lessons in the knowledge and practice of true virtue: in the meantime he earnestly conjures him to favour him with some short instructions, and teach him what is the true foundation of a spiritual life of faith, by what means the edifice is to be raised in our souls, and by what good works, by what virtues,

it is to be finished and brought to perfection. St James complied with his desire in eighteen excellent discourses, still extant. They are published at Rome in one volume, folio, in 1756, in Armenian and Latin, by M. Nicholas Antonelli, canon of the Lateran basilic.

The visible protection with which God watches over his servants ought to excite our confidence in him. He assures us that his tenderness for them surpasses the bowels of the most affectionate mother, and he styles himself their protector and their safeguard.<sup>1</sup> This made St Chrysostom cry out,<sup>2</sup> "Behold, I testify and proclaim to all men with a loud voice, and would raise it, were it possible, louder than any trumpet, that no man on earth can hurt a good Christian, nor even the tyrant the devil. 'If God be for us, who is against us?' says the apostle." How far otherwise is it with the wicked! They are cast off by their God; they are not his people; not fed or watched over by that special tender providence which he affords his servants: they are a forsaken, abandoned vineyard.<sup>3</sup> He is their enemy, and hath set his eyes upon them for evil, not for good.<sup>4</sup> What rest or comfort can the sinner enjoy who knows he hath an almighty arm continually stretched out against him?

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 11 :*

ST DROATAN, Abbot, a royal prince of Scotland, educated under the great Saint Columba; ST HIPULPHUS, Bishop, of an illustrious Bavarian family; he renounced great possessions in his youth to consecrate himself to God: ST JAMES, Bishop of Nisibis, 350, a glorious Doctor of the Syriac Church: and ST PIUS I, Pope and martyr; he succeeded Hyginus, 142.

## JULY 12

### ST JOHN GUALBERT, ABBOT, FOUNDER OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDER OF VALLISUMBROSA

(A.D. 1073)

[From his exact life compiled by Blaise Melanisius, General of his Order, with the long notes of Cuper the Bollandist. See also two other lives of the saint, with a long history of his miracles, ib. t. iii. Julij, p. 311.]

ST JOHN GUALBERT was born at Florence of rich and noble parents, and in his youth was carefully instructed in the Christian doctrine and in the elements of the sciences; but afterwards, by conversing with the world, he imbibed a relish for its vanities and follies. While a thirst of worldly pleasure kept possession of his desires, and seemed to him innocent, and while he thought a certain degree of worldly pride the privilege of his birth, he was a stranger to the gospel maxims of penance, meekness, and lowliness of heart; and all arguments of virtue lost their force upon him. But God was pleased by a remarkable accident to open his eyes, and to

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxiii. 16; Prov. iii. 23; Zach. ii. 8; Gen. xv. 1; Lev. xxxvi. 3.

<sup>2</sup> S. Chrys. Hom. 51 in Act., Hom. 15 in Rom., et 91 in Matt.

<sup>3</sup> Ose. i. 2; Zach. xi. 9; Isa. v. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Amos ix. 4.

discover to him his errors and the extent of his obligations. Hugo, his only brother, was murdered by a gentleman of the country; and our young nobleman determined to revenge the crime by the death of him who had perpetrated it, and who seemed out of the reach of the laws. It happened that riding with his man home to Florence on Good Friday, he met his enemy in so narrow a passage that it was impossible for either of them to avoid the other. John, seeing the murderer, drew his sword and was going to dispatch him. But the other, lighting from his horse, fell upon his knees, and with his arms across besought him by the passion of Jesus Christ, who suffered on that day, to spare his life. The remembrance of Christ, who prayed for his murderers on the cross, exceedingly affected the young nobleman, and meekly raising the suppliant from the ground with his hand, he said, "I can refuse nothing that is asked of me for the sake of Jesus Christ. I not only give you your life, but also my friendship for ever. Pray for me that God may pardon me my sin." After embracing each other they parted, and John went forward on his road till he came to the monastery of St Minias, of the holy Order of St Bennet. Going into the church, he offered up his prayers before a great crucifix, begging with many tears and extraordinary fervour that God would mercifully grant him the pardon of his sins. Whilst he continued his prayer the crucifix miraculously bowed its head to him, as it were to give him a token how acceptable the sacrifice of his resentment and his sincere repentance were. The divine grace made such deep impressions on his heart that, rising from his devotions, he cast himself at the feet of the abbot, earnestly begging to be admitted to the religious habit. The abbot was apprehensive of his father's displeasure; but at length was prevailed upon, with much ado, to allow him to live in the community in his secular habit. After a few days John cut off his hair himself, and put on a habit which he borrowed. His father, at this news of the step his son had taken, hastened to the monastery and stormed and complained dreadfully; till after some time, seeing the steadiness of his son's resolution, and hearing his reasons and motives, he was so well satisfied that he gave him his blessing, and exhorted him to persevere in his good purposes.

St John devoted himself to the exercises of his new state in the most perfect dispositions of a true penitent. He was most exact in every religious observance. He subdued his body with much fasting and watching; never gave way to idleness, but kept himself day and night employed almost in continual prayer. His corporeal austerities he animated with a perfect interior spirit of penance, or desire of punishing sin in himself, the more powerfully to move God to compassion and mercy towards him; and he endeavoured by them to facilitate the subjection of his passions, which victory he completed by a watchfulness over the motions of his own heart and heroic acts of all virtues, especially meekness and humility. But

assiduous and humble prayer and meditation were the principal means by which this wonderful change was effected in all the affections of his soul, so that he became entirely a new man. By fidelity and perseverance St John obtained the victory over himself, and became most eminent in meekness, humility, silence, obedience, modesty, and patience.

When the abbot died our saint was earnestly entreated by the greatest part of the monks to accept that dignity, but his consent could by no means be extorted. Not long after, he left this house with one companion and went in quest of a closer solitude. He paid a visit to the hermitage of Camaldoli; and, having edified himself with the example of its fervent inhabitants, he proceeded further, to an agreeable shady valley covered with willow-trees, commonly called Vallis-Umbrosa, in the diocese of Fiesoli, half a day's journey from Florence, in Tuscany. He found in that place two devout hermits, with whom he and his companion concerted a project to build themselves a small monastery of timber and mud-walls, and to form together a little community, serving God according to the primitive austere rule and spirit of the Order of St Bennet. The abess of St Hilary gave them the ground on which they desired to build, and when the monastery was finished the bishop of Paderborn, who attended the emperor Henry III into Italy, consecrated the chapel. Pope Alexander II in 1070 approved this new Order, together with the rule, in which the saint added certain particular constitutions to the original rule of St Bennet. From this confirmation is dated the foundation of the Order of Vallis-Umbrosa. St John was chosen the first abbot, nor was he able to decline that dignity. He gave his monks a habit of an ash colour; and settled among them retirement, silence, disengagement of their hearts from all earthly things, the most austere practice of penance, profound humility, and the most universal charity.

Though most humble and mild, he severely reproved the least tepidity or sloth in others. For the virtue of meekness is not further removed from intemperate anger, which clouds or dethrones reason, than from a vicious defect or tameness and stupidity which beholds vice with indifference. God has committed to every man a kind of trust and guardianship of virtue, whose rights we are obliged to maintain in proportion to our power, not only by example, but also by advice, exhortation, and reproof, as often as it is reasonable. And he who regards the sins of others with a careless unconcernedness makes himself accountable for them when it is in his power to prevent them. Superiors especially lie under the most grievous obligations to check and chastise the irregularities and faults of those under their immediate care and inspection. Our saint feared no less the danger of too great lenity and forbearance than that of harshness; and was a true imitator both of the mildness and zeal of the Jewish legislator, whom the Holy Ghost calls "the meekest of all men upon the face of the



earth." St John was himself a perfect model of all virtues, and tender and compassionate towards all, especially the sick. This compassion for them he learned by his own perpetual infirmities and weakness of stomach. Such was his humility that he would never be promoted even to Minor Orders, never presumed to approach nearer the altar than was necessary to receive the holy communion, and never would open the church door, but always prayed one in Minor Orders to open it for him. He was very zealous for holy poverty, and would not allow any monasteries to be built in a costly or sumptuous manner, thinking such edifices not agreeable to a spirit of poverty. He founded the monastery of St Salvi, that of Moscetta, that of Passignano, another at Rozzuolo, and another at Monte Salario. He reformed some other monasteries and left about twelve houses of his Order at his death. Besides monks, he received lay-brothers, who were exempt from choir and silence, and employed in external offices. This is said to be the first example of such a distinction; but it was soon imitated by other Orders. The saint's charity to the poor was not less active than his love for holy poverty. He would have no poor person sent from his door without an alms, and often emptied all the granaries and stores of his monasteries in relieving them. In a great dearth he supplied, sometimes by miracle, the multitudes of poor people that flocked to his monastery of Ruzzuolo. The saint was endowed with the spirit of prophecy, and by his prayers restored many sick persons to perfect health. The holy Pope Leo IX went to Passignano on purpose to see and converse with this holy man. Stephen IX and Alexander II had the greatest esteem for him. This latter testifies that the whole country where he lived owed to his zeal the entire extinction of simony. The holy man at length fell sick of a sharp fever at Passignano. He called for all the abbots and superiors of his Order, and telling them he was soon to leave them, strongly exhorted them to watch vigilantly over the most exact observance of their rule, and to maintain peace and fraternal charity. After this, having most devoutly received the last sacraments, he died happily on the 12th of July in 1073, being seventy-four years old. Pope Celestine III having caused juridical informations to be taken concerning his virtues, solemnly enrolled him among the saints in the year 1193.

The eminent degree of penance and sanctity to which the divine grace raised this saint was the fruit of his mildness in forgiving an injury. Christ not only commands us to pardon all offences, but has recommended this precept to us with his expiring breath, with his head crowned with thorns, and his hands stretched out for us. We renounce the glorious title of being his disciples if, whilst we behold him hanging on the cross and hear his last prayers, we trample on his sacred law and harbour malice in our hearts against a brother whom our dying Redeemer commands us to forgive for his sake. Can we be angry with him who is by so many sacred

ties our brother, the living son and member of our common Redeemer and Father, and whom we expect to be the associate of our happiness for all eternity? We owe infinitely more to Christ than any brother can owe to us: the least venial sin is an immense debt. Our Divine Master not only conjures us to forgive our brother for his sake, but also makes it our own infinite interest so to do, promising to pardon us our immense debts in the same manner as we pardon others.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 12 :*

ST JOHN GUALBERT, Abbot, founder of the Order of Umbrosa : ST NABOR and ST FELIX, suffered martyrdom in Milan about the year 304. A church was built over their tomb.

JULY 13

## ST EUGENIUS, BISHOP OF CARTHAGE, AND HIS COMPANIONS, CONFESSORS

(A.D. 505)

[From Victor Vitensis, *Hist. Persec. Vandal.* i, 2, and 3. See Tillemont, t. xvi. ; Ceillier, t. xv. p. 206 ; Rivet, *Hist. Lit. de la Fr.* p. 38. Ruinart, &c.]

THE Roman provinces in Africa were for a long time one of the richest and most noble portions of the empire. The Carthaginian barbarism and perfidy had given place to the most flourishing reign of the sciences, arts, and religion. The nobles of this country were all princes, and for riches and state seemed to vie with kings; its peace seemed on every side secure. But the strongest cities and empires are often nearest a fall; they are founded, to be again sooner or later torn to pieces. Every state has even within itself the seeds of its own destruction; these will occasion the dissolution of every body politic no less certainly than the internal weakness of the animal body must bring it to a fatal period. This was the condition of the Roman empire in its decline, when its rulers, to preserve Italy, which they regarded as its heart or head, abandoned its extremities to the Goths and Vandals. At a time when Africa thought of no danger, in the reign of the emperor Valentinian III in 428, Genseric, king of the Vandals and Alans, having lately made a settlement in part of Spain, passed into this country, and in a short time became master of those fertile provinces. This politic barbarian king kept great armies perpetually prepared for any expedition, by which he prevented the vigilance of his enemies, and astonished all the world with the rapidity of his enterprises. The Vandals, who were mostly Christians, but infected with the Arian heresy, laid the whole country waste by fire and sword, plundered all places, even churches and monasteries; burned alive two bishops, and tortured others to extort from them the treasures of their churches; razed the public buildings at Carthage, and banished Quodvultdeus, bishop of that city, with many

others. But in 454, at the request of the Emperor Valentinian, Genseric allowed the Catholics to choose a bishop of Carthage, and St Deogratias was raised to that dignity, who died soon after Genseric was returned from the plunder of Rome. The persecution growing hotter, many suffered torments for the faith, and several received the crown of martyrdom. The Arians, by a sacrilege never before heard of, made themselves shirts and breeches of the altar-cloths, and at Tinuzuda spilt and scattered the body and blood of Christ on the pavement. Catholics being by an edict disqualified for bearing any office in the government, Armogastes, a nobleman who held an honourable post in the household of Theodoric, the king's son, was condemned by the tyrant to keep cattle. Genseric dying after a reign of thirty-seven years, was succeeded by his son Huneric, a more barbarous persecutor than his father had ever been.

The episcopal see of Carthage had remained vacant twenty-four years when, in 481, Huneric permitted the Catholics on certain conditions to choose one who should fill it. The people, impatient to enjoy the comfort of a pastor, pitched upon Eugenius, a citizen of Carthage, eminent for his learning, zeal, piety, and prudence; and such was his deportment in this dignity that he was venerable to the very heretics, and so dear to the Catholics that everyone of them would have thought it a happiness to lay down his life for him. His charities to the distressed were excessive, especially considering his poverty. But he always found resources for their necessities in the hearts of his people; and he refused himself everything that he might give all to the poor. When others put him in mind that he ought to reserve something for his own necessities, his answer was: "If the good pastor must lay down his life for his flock, can it be excusable for me to be solicitous for the necessities of my body?" He fasted every day, and often allowed himself only a most slender evening refecton of bread and water. His virtue gained him the respect and esteem even of the Arians; but at length envy and blind zeal got the ascendant in their breasts, and the king sent him an order never to sit in the episcopal throne, preach to the people, or admit into his chapel any Vandals, among whom several were Catholics. The saint boldly answered the messenger that the laws of God commanded him not to shut the door of his church to any that desired to serve him in it. Huneric, enraged at this answer, persecuted the Catholics many ways, especially the Vandals who had embraced the faith. He commanded guards to be placed at the doors of the Catholic churches, who when they saw any man or woman going in clothed in the habit of the Vandals, struck them on the head with short staffs jagged and indented, which being twisted into their hair, and drawn back with great violence, tore off the hair and skin together. Some lost their eyes by this means, and others died with the extreme pain; but many lived a long time after. Women, with their heads flayed in this manner,

were publicly led through the streets, with a crier going before them to show them to the people. But this barbarous usage did not cause anyone to forsake the true religion. Next, the tyrant deprived the Catholics who were at court of their pensions, and sent them to work in the country. He also ordered that none should be admitted to bear any office in his palace, or any public charge, who was not an Arian. He afterwards turned them out of their houses, stripped them of all their wealth, and sent them to Sicily or Sardinia. After this, his persecution fell on all Catholics. One edict followed another against them, and the cloud thickened every day over their head. Many nuns were so cruelly tortured that several died on the rack. Great numbers of bishops, priests, deacons, and eminent Catholic laymen were banished, to the number of four thousand nine hundred and seventy-six, all whom the tyrant sent into a desert, where they were fed with barley like horses. This desert was filled with scorpions and venomous serpents; but they did not destroy any of the servants of God. The people followed their bishops and priests with lighted tapers in their hands, and mothers carried their little babes in their arms, and laid them at the feet of the confessors, all crying out with tears, "Going yourselves to your crowns, to whom do you leave us? Who will baptize our children? Who will impart to us the benefit of penance, and discharge us from the bonds of sins by the favour of reconciliation and pardon? Who will bury us with solemn supplications at our death? By whom will divine sacrifices be made?"

The Bishop Eugenius was spared in the first storm, probably that the inhabitants of the capital might seem to be somewhat considered. But in May 483 the king sent him a summons requiring the Catholics, whom he called Homoousians, to hold a conference or disputation with his Arian bishops at Carthage on the 1st day of February ensuing. Eugenius answered the terms were not equal, seeing their enemies were to be judges; and that as it was the common cause of all churches, other foreign churches ought to be invited and consulted, "especially the Church of Rome, which is the head of all churches." About that time one Felix, who had been long blind, addressed himself to St Eugenius desiring him to pray that he might recover his sight, saying he had been admonished by a vision so to do. The bishop showed great reluctance and confusion, alleging that he was a base sinner; but at length, after blessing the font for the solemn administration of baptism on the Epiphany, he said to the blind man, "I have told you that I am a sinner, and the last of all men; but I pray God that he show you mercy according to your faith, and restore to you your sight." Then he made the sign of the cross on his eyes and the blind man saw; the whole city was witness to the triumph of the faith. The king sent for Felix, and examined himself all the circumstances of the miracle, which he found too evident to be called in question. However,

the Arian bishops told him that Eugenius had performed it by recourse to art magic. The Catholics made choice of ten disputants for the conference, which was opened on the 5th of February. Cyrila, patriarch of the Arians, was seated on a throne; the Catholics, who were standing, asked who were the commissioners to take down in writing what should pass in the disputation; and were answered that Cyrila would perform that office. The Catholics asked by what authority he claimed the jurisdiction and rank of patriarch. The Arians, not being able to produce any sufficient warrant for his usurpation, filled the hall with noise and tumult, and obtained an order that every lay-Catholic there present should receive a hundred bastinadoes. Cyrila sought various pretences to defer the conference. The Catholics, however, presented a written confession of their faith. This takes up the whole third book of Victor's history, though he has only inserted the first part, in which the consubstantiality of God the Son is proved from the scriptures. The second part, which confirmed the same from the writings of the fathers, is lost. This confession seems to have been drawn up by St Eugenius, to whom Gennadius ascribes a confession of faith against the Arians.

When this was read, the Arians quarrelled that the orthodox took the name of Catholics, though this was given them by the whole world, even by the heretics themselves, as St Austin observed a little before this time in that very country. Upon this, however, the Arians abruptly broke up the conference, and the king, on the 25th of February in 484, published a severe edict for a general persecution, which he had already prepared for that purpose. By this all the Catholic clergy were banished out of towns and forbidden to perform any functions even in the country; all Catholics were declared incapable of inheriting, or disposing of any estate real or personal, with other such articles. Executioners were dispatched to all parts of the kingdom, and many Catholics were put to barbarous deaths, and many more inhumanly tormented. One Dionysia, after having been herself cruelly scourged, seeing her son Majoricus, a tender youth, tremble at the sight of the torments prepared for him, she looked on him with a stern countenance and said, "Remember, son, we were baptized in the name of the Trinity, and in the bosom of our mother the church." The young man, encouraged by these words, suffered martyrdom with undaunted resolution, and his mother buried him within her own house, that she might every day offer to the holy Trinity her prayers over his grave, in the lively hope of a glorious resurrection with him at the last day. Her cousin Emilius, her sister Dativa, and innumerable others in different parts of Africa received the like crowns. At Typasus, in Mauritania Cæsariensis, certain Catholics who had assisted at the celebration of the divine mysteries in a private house were informed against and, by the king's order, had their tongues plucked out and their right hands

cut off; yet they spoke as well as ever, as St Victor Vitensis, an eye-witness, assures us. He says Reparatus, a subdeacon, one of this number, was entertained, when he wrote, in the court of the Emperor Zena, at Constantinople, and was there highly honoured, especially by the empress; and that, though entirely deprived of his tongue, he spoke gracefully, and without the least defect or imperfection. Æneas of Gaza, a Platonic philosopher, who was then at Constantinople and wrote in 533, says he himself had seen them in that city, and had heard them speak distinctly; and, not being able to believe his own ears, he had examined their mouths and seen that their tongues were plucked out to the very roots, so that he wondered they could have survived so cruel a torment. Procopius, who wrote soon after, says also that he had seen these persons at Constantinople, and had heard them speak freely, without feeling anything of their punishment; but that two of them, by falling into a grievous sin of the flesh, lost the use of their speech, which they had till then enjoyed.

The tyrant wreaked his impotent vengeance on many others, especially on Vandals who had been converted to the Catholic faith, but was not able to overcome their heroic constancy. The streets of Carthage were filled with spectacles of his cruelty; and one was there meeting continually some without hands, others without eyes, nose, or ears, others whose heads appeared sunk in between their shoulders by having been hung up by the hands on the tops of houses for sights to the people. Above four hundred and sixty bishops were brought to Carthage in order to be sent into banishment: of this number eighty-eight died under great hardships at Carthage, some few made their escape, and the rest were banished. St Eugenius, after having long encouraged others to the conflict, was himself at length, on a sudden, carried into exile without being allowed to take leave of his friends. He found means, however, to write a letter to his flock, which St Gregory of Tours has preserved. In it he says, "I with tears beg, exhort, and conjure you, by the dreadful day of judgment, and the awful light of the coming of Christ, that you hold fast the Catholic faith. Preserve the grace of the holy baptism and the unction of the chrism. Let no man born again of water return to the water." This he mentions, because the Arians in Africa, like the Donatists, rebaptized those that came over to their sect. St Eugenius protests to his flock that if they remain constant no distance nor death could separate him from them in spirit; but that he was innocent of the blood of those that should perish, and that this his letter would be read before the tribunal of Christ at the last day for the severer condemnation of such base apostates. "If I return to Carthage," says he, "I shall see you in this life; if not, I shall meet you in the other. Pray for us, and fast; fasting and alms have never failed to move God to mercy. Above all things, remember that we are not to fear those who can only kill the body."

We have a catalogue of all the bishops of the provinces of Africa who came to the conference and were sent into banishment; namely, fifty-four of the proconsular province, one hundred and twenty-five of Numidia, one hundred and seven of the province of Byzacena, one hundred and twenty of the province of Mauritania Cæsariensis, forty-four from the province of Sitifi, five from that of Tripolis, besides ten from Sardinia and other places; in all, four hundred and sixty-four bishops, of which number eighty-eight died at Carthage before their departure into exile, forty-six were banished to Corsica, three hundred and three to other places, and twenty-eight made their escape. St Eugenius was carried into the uninhabited desert country in the province of Tripolis, and committed to the guard of Antony, an inhuman Arian bishop, who treated him with the utmost barbarity. The saint added to his sufferings voluntary austerities, wore a rough hair-shirt, lay on the ground, and passed great part of the night in prayer and tears. When he was afflicted with a palsy, Antony, because vinegar was contrary to his distemper, obliged him to drink it in large quantities. Yet God was pleased to restore his servant to his health. It is observed by our historian that the Arian bishops were all cruel persecutors, and went through the cities and provinces filling all places with scenes of horror, rebaptizing persons by force and violence, scourging, mangling, torturing, and banishing even women and children. The fifth book of the history of this persecution is filled with examples. The apostates signalized themselves above others by the cruelties which they exercised upon the orthodox. Elpidophorus, one of this number, was appointed judge at Carthage to condemn the more zealous to be tortured. Muritta, the deacon who had assisted when he was baptized in the bosom of the Catholic Church, being brought before him, took with him the chrismale, or white garment, with which at the time he received the apostate coming out of the font he had clothed him, as an emblem of that innocence which he engaged himself to preserve always unspotted; and producing it before the whole assembly, he said, "This robe will accuse you when the judge shall appear in majesty at the last day. It will bear testimony against you to your condemnation." This relation is gathered from St Victor, Bishop of Vita, in the province of Byzacena, who, being banished by King Huneric for the faith in 487, retired to Constantinople, and wrote (probably in that city) in five books the history of the Vandalic persecution.

St Victor relates that Huneric, the great persecutor of the church, died miserably, being devoured by worms, in December 484, having reigned almost eight years. Nor was he succeeded, as he had earnestly desired, by his son Hilderic, but by Gontamund, a nephew, whom the maturity of his age rendered better able to bear the burden of the state. This prince, in the year 488, which was the fourth of his reign, recalled St Eugenius to Carthage and, at his request, opened the churches of the

Catholics and permitted the exiled priests also to return. Gontamund died in 496, and his brother Thrasimund was called to the crown, of whom mention hath been made in the life of St Fulgentius. St Gregory of Tours relates that by his authority the judges condemned our saint, one Longinus, and St Vindemial, Bishop of Capsa in Africa, to be beheaded. St Vindemial died by the sword; but the tyrant commanded St Eugenius to be led to the place of execution, and though he protested under the axe that he would rather lose his life than depart from the Catholic faith, he was again brought back to Carthage and banished into Languedoc, which country was then subject to Alaric, King of the Visigoths, who was also an Arian. He died in his exile in a monastery which he built and governed at Viance (since called St Amaranth's, from the tomb of that martyr), about a mile from Albi. He passed to a better life in 505, on the 13th of July. King Hilderic afterwards recalled the surviving exiled prelates; but peace was not perfectly restored to that church before the year 534, when Belisarius, a general who was master of all the maxims of the first Romans with regard to the art of war, vanquished Gelimer, the last Vandal king in Africa, and sent him prisoner to Constantinople.

The saints chose to suffer every temporal loss, torment, or death with which the world could threaten them rather than lose the holy treasure of faith. "Faith is the solid foundation of all virtues," says St Ambrose. And in another place he cries out: "O faith, richer than all treasures! more healing and sovereign than all medicines!" Our faith, if true, must have three conditions or qualities. 1. It must be firm, admitting no doubt or wavering; ready to brave all dangers, torments, and death; thus it filled the martyrs with joy under the most affrighting trials, and made them triumph over fires and the sword. 2. It must be entire; for the least wilful obstinate error concerning one article destroys the whole fabric of faith by rejecting its motive which is everywhere the same testimony of divine revelation. "You who believe what you please, and reject what you please, believe yourselves or your own fancy, rather than the gospel," as St Austin says. 3. Faith must be active, animated by charity, fruitful in good works. A dead or a barren faith is compared by St James to a carcase without a soul, and to the faith of the devils who believe and tremble. How active and animated was faith in the souls of all the saints! the eminent virtues which we admire in them were all the fruit of their faith and sprang from this root. With what care ought we to nourish and improve this holy seed in our breasts!

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 13 :*

ST ANACLETUS, Pope; he governed the Church after St Clement; he suffered much and is styled a martyr: ST EUGENIUS, Bishop of Carthage, and his COMPANIONS, confessors of the faith against the Arians: and ST TULIUS, Bishop of Dol in Brittany. His relics are still kept at St Germain-des-Prés, and fires are said to have been miraculously extinguished by them.



JULY 14

## ST CAMILLUS DE LELLIS, CONFESSOR

HE was born in 1550 at Bacchianico in Abruzzo, in the kingdom of Naples. He lost his mother in his infancy, and six years after his father, who was a gentleman, and had been an officer first in the Neapolitan and afterwards in the French troops in Italy. Camillus having learned only to read and write, entered himself young in the army and served first in the Venetian and afterwards in the Neapolitan troops till, in 1574, his company was disbanded. He had contracted so violent a passion for cards and gaming that he sometimes lost even necessaries. All playing at lawful games for exorbitant sums, and absolutely all games of hazard for considerable sums, are forbidden by the law of nature, by the imperial or civil law,<sup>1</sup> by the severest laws of all Christian or civilized nations, and by the canons of the church. No contract is justifiable in which neither reason nor proportion is observed. The best remedy for this vice is, that those who are infected with it be obliged, or at least exhorted, to give whatever they have won to the poor.

Camillus was insensible of the evils attending gaming till necessity compelled him to open his eyes; for he at length was reduced to such straits that for a subsistence he was obliged to drive two asses and to work at a building which belonged to the Capuchin friars. The divine mercy had not abandoned him through all his wanderings, but had often visited him with strong interior calls to penance. A moving exhortation which the guardian of the Capuchins one day made him completed his conversion. Ruminating on it as he rode from him upon his business, he at length alighted, fell on his knees, and vehemently striking his breast, with many tears and loud groans deplored his past unthinking sinful life, and cried to heaven for mercy. This happened in February in the year 1575, the twenty-fifth of his age; and from that time to his last breath he never interrupted his penitential course. He made an essay of a novitiate both among the Capuchins and the Grey Friars, but could not be admitted to his religious profession among either on account of a running sore in one of his legs, which was judged incurable. Therefore, leaving his own country he went to Rome, and there served the sick in St James's hospital of incurables for years with great fervour. He wore a knotty hair shirt, and a rough brass girdle next his skin; watched night and day about the sick, especially those that were dying, with the most scrupulous attention. He was most zealous to suggest to them devout acts of virtue, and to procure them every spiritual help. Fervent humble prayer was the assiduous exercise of his soul, and he received the holy communion every Sunday

<sup>1</sup> Tit. de Aleatoribus tam in Digesto quam in Codice.

and holiday, making use of St Philip Neri for his confessarius. The provisors or administrators having been witnesses to his charity, prudence, and piety, after some time appointed him director of the hospital.

Camillus, grieving to see the sloth of hired servants in attending the sick, formed a project of associating certain pious persons for that office, who should be desirous to devote themselves to it out of a motive of fervent charity. He found proper persons so disposed, but met with great obstacles in the execution of his design. With a view of rendering himself more useful in spiritually assisting the sick, he took a resolution to prepare himself to receive holy orders. For this purpose he went through a course of studies with incredible alacrity and ardour, and received all his orders from Thomas Goldwell, Bishop of St Asaph's, suffragan to Cardinal Savelli, the bishop vicegerent in Rome, under Pope Gregory XIII. A certain gentleman of Rome, named Firmo Calmo, gave the saint six hundred Roman sequines of gold (about two hundred and fifty pounds sterling), which he put out for an annuity of thirty-six sequines a year during his life; this amounting to a competent patrimony for the title of his ordination, required by the council of Trent and the laws of the diocese. The same pious gentleman, besides frequent great benefactions during his life, bequeathed his whole estate, real and personal, on Camillus's hospital at his death. The saint was ordained priest at Whitsuntide in 1584, and being nominated to serve a little chapel called our Lady's *ad miracula*, he quitted the direction of the hospital. Before the close of the same year he laid the foundation of his congregation for serving the sick, giving to those who were admitted into it a long black garment with a black cloth for their habit. The saint prescribed them certain short rules, and they went every day to the great hospital of the Holy Ghost, where they served the sick with so much affection, piety, and diligence that it was visible to all who saw them that they considered Christ himself as lying sick or wounded in his members.

They made the beds of the patients, paid them every office of charity, and by their short pathetic exhortations disposed them for the last sacraments and a happy death. The founder had powerful adversaries and great difficulties to struggle with; but by confidence in God he conquered them all. In 1585 his friends hired for him a large house, and the success of his undertaking encouraged him to extend further his pious views; for he ordained that the members of his congregation should bind themselves by the obligation of their institute to serve persons infected with the plague, prisoners, and those who lie dying in private houses.

Sickness is often the most severe and grievous of all trials, whence the devil made it his last assault in tempting Job.<sup>1</sup> It is a time in which a Christian stands in need of the greatest constancy and fortitude; yet,

<sup>1</sup> Job ii. 4.

through the weakness of nature, is generally the least able to keep his heart united with God, and usually never stands more in need of spiritual comfort and assistance. The state of sickness is always a visitation of God, who by it knocks at the door of our heart and puts us in mind of death; it is the touchstone of patience, and the school or rather the harvest of penance, resignation, divine love, and every virtue. Yet by a most fatal abuse is this mercy often lost and perverted by sloth, impatience, sensuality, and frowardness. Those who in time of health were backward in exercising fervent acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, &c., in sickness are still more indisposed for practices with which they are unacquainted: and, to their grievous misfortune, sometimes pastors cannot sufficiently attend them, or have not a suitable address which will give them the key of their hearts or teach them the art of insinuating into the souls of penitents the heroic sentiments and an interior relish of those essential virtues.

This consideration moved Camillus to make it the chief end of his new establishment to afford or procure the sick all spiritual succour, discreetly to suggest to them short pathetic acts of compunction and other virtues, to read by them, and to pray for them. For this end he furnished his priests with proper books of devotion, especially on penance and on the sufferings of Christ; and he taught them to have always at hand the most suitable ejaculations extracted from the psalms and other devotions. But dying persons were the principal object of our saint's pious zeal and charity. A man's last moments are the most precious of his whole life, and are of infinite importance, as on them depends his eternal lot. Then the devil useth his utmost efforts to ruin a soul, and "cometh down, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time."<sup>1</sup> The saint therefore redoubled his earnestness to afford every spiritual help to persons who seemed in danger of death. He put them early in mind to settle their temporal concerns, that their thoughts might be afterwards employed entirely on the affair of their soul. He advised those friends not to approach them too much whose sight or immoderate grief could only disturb or afflict them. He disposed them to receive the last sacraments by the most perfect acts of compunction, resignation, faith, hope, and divine love; and he taught them to make death a voluntary sacrifice of themselves to the divine will, and in satisfaction for sin, of which it is the punishment. He instructed them to conjure their blessed Redeemer by the bitter anguish which his divine heart felt in the garden and on the cross, and by his prayer with a loud voice and tears, in which he deserved to be heard for his reverence, that he would show them mercy, and give them the grace to offer up their death in union with his most precious death, and to receive their soul as he with his last breath recommended his own divine soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, and with it those of all his

<sup>1</sup> Apoc. xii. 12.

elect to the end of the world. He instituted prayers for all persons in their agony, or who were near their death.

Everyone was charmed at so perfect a project of charity, and all admired that such noble views and so great an undertaking should have been reserved to an obscure, illiterate person. Pope Sixtus V confirmed this congregation in 1586, and ordered that it should be governed by a triennial superior. Camillus was the first, and Roger, an Englishman, was one of his first companions. The Church of St Mary Magdalen was bestowed on him for the use of his congregation. In 1518 he was invited to Naples, and with twelve companions founded there a new house. Certain galleys having the plague on board were forbid to enter the harbour; wherefore these pious "Servants of the Sick" (for that was the name they took) went on board and attended them; on which occasion two of their number died of the pestilence, and were the first martyrs of charity in this holy institute. St Camillus showed a like charity in Rome when a pestilential fever swept off great numbers, and again when that city was visited by a violent famine. In 1591 Gregory XV erected this congregation into a religious Order, with all the privileges of the mendicant Orders, and under the obligation of the four vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and perpetually serving the sick, even those infected with the plague. He forbade these religious men to pass to any other Order except to that of the Carthusians. Pope Clement VIII in 1592 and 1600 again confirmed this Order, with additional privileges. Indeed the very end of this institution engaged all men to favour it; especially those who considered how many thousands die, even in the midst of priests, without sufficient help in preparing themselves for that dreadful hour which decides their eternity: what superficial confessions, what neglect in acts of contrition, charity, restitution, and other essential duties, are often to be feared; which grievous evils might be frequently remedied by the assiduity of well qualified ministers.

Among many abuses and dangerous evils which the zeal of St Camillus prevented, his attention to every circumstance relating to the care of dying persons soon made him discover that in hospitals many are buried alive, of which Cicatello relates several examples,<sup>1</sup> particularly of one buried in a vault, who was found walking about in it when the next corpse was brought to be there interred. Hence the saint ordered his religious to continue the prayers for souls yet in their agony for a quarter of an hour after they seem to have drawn their last breath, and not to suffer their faces to be covered so soon as is usual, by which means those that are not dead are stifled. This precaution is most necessary in cases of drowning, apoplexies, and such accidents and distempers which arise from mere obstructions or some sudden revolution of humours. St Camillus showed

<sup>1</sup> Cicat. lib. ii. c. 1, p. 446.

still a far greater solicitude to provide all comfort and assistance for the souls of those that are sick, suggesting frequent short pathetic aspirations, showing them a crucifix, examining their past confessions and present dispositions, and making them exhortations with such unction and fervour that his voice seemed like a shrill trumpet, and pierced the hearts of all who heard him. He encouraged his disciples to these duties with words of fire. He did not love to hear anything spoke unless divine charity made part of the subject; and if he heard a sermon in which it was not mentioned, he would call the discourse a gold ring without a stone.

He was himself afflicted with many corporal infirmities, as a sore in his leg for forty-six years; a rupture for thirty-eight years, which he got by serving the sick; two callous sores in the sole of one of his feet, which gave him great pain; violent nephritic colics, and for a long time before he died, a loss of appetite. Under this complication of diseases he would not suffer any one to wait on him, but sent all his brethren to serve poor sick persons. When he was not able to stand he would creep out of his bed, even in the night, by the sides of the beds, and crawl from one patient to another to exhort them to acts of virtue, and see if they wanted anything. He slept very little, spending a great part of the night in prayer and in serving the sick. He used often to repeat with St Francis: "So great is the happiness which I hope for, that all pain and suffering is a pleasure." His friars are not obliged to recite the church office unless they are in holy orders; but confess and communicate every Sunday and great holiday, have every day one hour's meditation, hear mass, and say the litany, beads, and other devotions. The holy founder was most scrupulously exact in every word and ceremony of the holy mass, and of the divine office. He despised himself to a degree that astonished all who knew him. He laid down the generalship in 1607, that he might be more at leisure to serve the poor. He founded religious houses at Bologna, Milan, Genoa, Florence, Ferrara, Messina, Palermo, Mantua, Viterbo, Bocchiano, Theate, Burgonono, Sinuessa, and other places. He had sent several of his friars into Hungary, and to all other places which in his time were afflicted with the plague. When Nola was visited with that calamity in 1600, the bishop constituted Camillus his vicar-general, and it is incredible what succours the sick received from him and his companions, of whom five died of that distemper. God testified his approbation of the saint's zeal by the spirit of prophecy and the gift of miracles on several occasions, and by many heavenly communications and favours.

He assisted at the fifth general chapter of his Order in Rome in 1613, and after it, with the new general, visited the houses in Lombardy, giving them his last exhortations, which were everywhere received with tears. At Genoa he was extremely ill, but being a little better, Duke Doria Tursi sent him in his rich galley to Civita Vecchia, whence he was conveyed in a litter

to Rome. He recovered so as to be able to finish the visitation of his hospitals, but soon relapsed, and his life was despaired of by the physicians. Hearing this, he said, "I rejoice in what hath been told me; we shall go into the house of the Lord." He received the viaticum from the hands of Cardinal Ginnasio, protector of his Order, and said with many tears, "O Lord, I confess I am the most wretched of sinners, most undeserving of thy favour; but save me by thy infinite goodness. My hope is placed in thy divine mercy through thy precious blood." Though he had lived in the greatest purity of conscience ever since his conversion, he had been accustomed to go every day to confession with great compunction and many tears. When he received the extreme unction, he made a moving exhortation to his religious brethren, and having foretold that he should die that evening, he expired on the 14th of July 1614, being sixty-five years, one month, and twenty days old. He was buried near the high altar in St Mary Magdalen's Church; but upon the miracles which were authentically approved, his remains were taken up and laid under the altar; they were enshrined after he was beatified in 1742, and in 1746 he was solemnly canonized by Benedict XIV.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 14 :*

ST BONAVENTURE, Cardinal-Bishop and Doctor of the Church, surnamed "The Seraphic Doctor," 1274 : ST CAMILLUS DE LELLIS, who, losing his parents early in life, entered the army where he contracted a violent passion for gaming. Later being converted, he devoted his life to the sick and dying in hospitals. BLESSED GILES OF ASSISIO, the third companion of St Francis : and ST IDUS, a worthy disciple of St Patrick, by whom he was baptized.

JULY 15

ST HENRY II, EMPEROR

(A.D. 1024)

[From his authentic life, published by Surius and D'Andilly, and from the historians Sigebert Glaber, Dithmar, Lambert of Aschaffenburg, Leo Urbevetanus in his double chronicle of the popes and emperors, in *Deliciae Eruditor*, t. i. and ii. ; *Aventin's Annals of Bavaria*, &c.]

ST HENRY, surnamed the Pious and the Lamé, was son of Henry, Duke of Bavaria, and of Gisella, daughter of Conrad, King of Burgundy, and was born in 972. He was descended from Henry, Duke of Bavaria, son of the Emperor Henry the Fowler, and brother of Otho the Great, consequently our saint was near akin to the three first emperors who bore the name of Otho. St Wolfgang, the Bishop of Ratisbon, being a prelate, the most eminent in all Germany for learning, piety, and zeal, our young prince was put under his tuition, and by his excellent instructions and example he made from his infancy wonderful progress in learning and in the most perfect practice of Christian virtue. The death of his dear master and spiritual guide, which happened in 994, was to him a most sensible affliction. In the following year he succeeded his father in the duchy of

Bavaria, and in 1002, upon the death of his cousin Otho III, he was chosen emperor. He was the same year crowned King of Germany, at Mentz, by the archbishop of that city. He had always before his eyes the extreme dangers to which they are exposed who move on the precipice of power, and that all human things are like edifices of sand, which every breath of time threatens to overturn or deface; he studied the extent and importance of the obligations which attended his dignity; and by the assiduous practice of humiliations, prayer, and pious meditation, he maintained in his heart the necessary spirit of humility and holy fear, and was enabled to bear the tide of prosperity and honour with a constant evenness of temper. Sensible of the end for which alone he was exalted by God to the highest temporal dignity, he exerted his most strenuous endeavours to promote in all things the divine honour, the exaltation of the church, and the peace and happiness of his people.

Soon after his accession to the throne, he resigned the dukedom of Bavaria, which he bestowed on his brother-in-law, Henry, surnamed Senior. He procured a national council of the bishops of all his dominions, which was assembled at Dortmund, in Westphalia, in 1005, in order to regulate many points of discipline, and to enforce a strict observance of the holy canons. It was owing to his zeal that many provincial synods were also held for the same purpose in several parts of the empire. He was himself present at that of Frankfort in 1006, and at another of Bamberg in 1011. The protection he owed his subjects engaged him sometimes in wars, in all which he was successful. By his prudence, courage, and clemency, he stifled a rebellion at home in the beginning of his reign, and without striking a stroke compelled the malcontents to lay down their arms at his feet, which, when they had done, he received them into favour. Two years after, he quelled another rebellion in Italy, when Ardovinus or Hardwic, a Lombard lord, had caused himself to be crowned king at Milan. This nobleman, after his defeat, made his submission and obtained his pardon. When he had afterwards revolted a second time, the emperor marched again into Italy, vanquished him in battle, and deprived him of his territories, but did not take away his life, and Ardovinus became a monk. After this second victory, St Henry went in triumph to Rome where, in 1014, he was crowned emperor with great solemnity by Pope Benedict VIII. On that occasion, to give a proof of his devotion to the holy see, he confirmed to it, by an ample diploma, the donation made by several former emperors, of the sovereignty of Rome and the exarchate of Ravenna; and after a short stay at Rome, took leave of the pope, and in his return to Germany, kept the Easter holidays at Pavia; then he visited the monastery of Cluni, on which he bestowed the imperial globe of gold which the pope had given him, and a gold crown enriched with precious stones. He paid his devotions in other monasteries on the road, leaving

in everyone of them some rich monument of his piety and liberality. But the most acceptable offering which he made to God was the fervour and purity of affection with which he renewed the consecration of his soul to God in all places where he came, especially at the foot of the altars. Travelling through Liége and Triers, he arrived at Bamberg, in which city he had lately founded a rich episcopal see, and had built a most stately cathedral in honour of St Peter, which Pope John XVIII took a journey into Germany to consecrate in 1019.

The idolatrous inhabitants of Poland and Sclavonia had laid waste the diocese of Meersburg, and destroyed that and several other churches. St Henry marched against those barbarous nations, and having put his army under the protection of the holy martyrs, St Laurence, St George, and St Adrian, who are said to have been seen in the battle fighting before him, he defeated the infidels. He had made a vow to re-establish the see of Meersburg in case he obtained the victory, and he caused all his army to communicate the day before the battle which was fought near that city. The barbarians were seized with a panic fear in the beginning of the action, and submitted at discretion. The princes of Bohemia rebelled, but were easily brought back to their duty. The victorious emperor munificently repaired and restored the episcopal sees of Hildesheim, Magdeburg, Strasburg, Misnia, and Meersburg, and made all Poland, Bohemia, and Moravia, tributary to the empire. He procured holy preachers to be sent to instruct the Bohemians and Polanders in the faith. Those have been mistaken who pretend that St Henry converted St Stephen, King of Hungary; for that prince was born of Christian parents. But our saint promoted his zealous endeavours, and had a great share in his apostolic undertakings for the conversion of his people.

The protection of Christendom, and especially of the holy see, obliged St Henry to lead an army to the extremity of Italy, where he vanquished the conquering Saracens, with their allies the Greeks, and drove them out of Italy, left a governor in the provinces which he had recovered, and suffered the Normans to enjoy the territories which they had then wrested from the infidels, but restrained them from turning their arms towards Naples or Benevento. He came back by Mount Cassino, and was honourably received at Rome; but during his stay in that city, by a painful contraction of the sinews in his thigh, became lame, and continued so till his death. He passed by Cluni, and in the duchy of Luxemburg had an interview with Robert, King of France, son and successor of Hugh Capet. It had been agreed that, to avoid all disputes of pre-eminence, the two princes should hold their conference in boats on the river Meuse, which, as Glaber writes, was at that time the boundary that parted their dominions. But Henry, impatient to embrace and cement a friendship with that great and virtuous king, paid the first visit to Robert in his tent, and afterwards



received him in his own. A war had broke out between these two princes in 1006, and Henry gave the French a great overthrow; but being desirous only to govern his dominions in peace, he entered into negotiations which produced a lasting peace. In this interview, which was held in 1023, the conference of the two princes turned on the most important affairs of church and state, and on the best means of advancing piety, religion, and the welfare of their subjects. After the most cordial demonstrations of sincere friendship, they took leave of each other, and St Henry proceeded to Verdun and Metz.

Nothing seemed to escape him; and whilst he was most active and vigilant in every duty which he owed to the public, he did not forget that the care of his own soul, and the regulation of his interior, was his first and most essential obligation. He was sensible that pride and vain-glory are the most dangerous of all vices, and that they are the most difficult to be discovered, and the last that are vanquished in the spiritual warfare; that humility is the very foundation of all true virtue, and our progress in it the measure of our advancement in Christian perfection. Therefore, the higher he was exalted in worldly honours, the more did he study to humble himself, and it is said of him, that never was greater humility seen under a diadem. He loved those persons best who most freely put him in mind of his mistakes, and these he was always most ready to confess and to make for them the most ample reparation. Through mis-informations he, for some time, harboured coldness toward St Herebert, Archbishop of Cologne; but, discovering the innocence and sanctity of that prelate, he fell at his feet and would not rise till he had received his absolution and pardon. He banished flatterers from his presence, calling them the greatest pests of courts; for none can put such an affront on a man's judgment and modesty as to praise him to his face, but the base and most wicked of interested and designing men, who make use of this artifice to insinuate themselves into the favour of a prince, to abuse his weakness and credulity, and to make him the dupe of their injustices. He who listens to them exposes himself to many misfortunes and crimes, to the danger of the most foolish pride and vain-glory, and to the ridicule and scorn of his flatterers themselves; for a vanity that can publicly hear its own praises, openly unmasks itself to its confusion. The Emperor Sigismund, giving a flatterer a blow on the face, called his fulsome praise the greatest insult that had ever been offered him. St Henry was raised by religion and humility above this abjectness of soul, which reason itself teaches us to abhor and despise. By the assiduous mortification of the senses, he kept his passions in subjection. For pleasure, unless we are guarded against its assaults, steals upon us by insensible degrees, smooths its passage to the heart by a gentle and insinuating address, and softens and disarms the soul of all its strength. Nor is it possible for us to triumph

over unlawful sensual delights, unless we moderate and practise frequent self-denials with regard to lawful gratifications. The love of the world is a no less dangerous enemy, especially amidst honours and affluence; and created objects have this quality, that they first seduce the heart and then blind the understanding. By conversing always in heaven, St Henry raised his affections so much above the earth as to escape this snare.

Prayer seemed the chief delight and support of his soul; especially the public office of the church. Assisting one day at this holy function at Strasburg, he so earnestly desired to remain always there to sing the divine praises among the devout canons of that church that, finding this impossible, he founded there a new canonry for one who should always perform that sacred duty in his name. In this spirit of devotion it has been established that the kings of France are canons of Strasburg, Lyons, and some other places; as in the former place the emperors, in the latter the dukes of Burgundy, were before them. The holy sacrament of the altar and sacrifice of the mass were the object of St Henry's most tender devotion. The blessed Mother of God he honoured as his chief patroness, and among other exercises by which he recommended himself to her intercession, it was his custom, upon coming to any town, to spend a great part of the first night in watching and prayer in some church dedicated to God under her name, as at Rome in St Mary Major. He had a singular devotion to the good angels and to all the saints. Though he lived in the world so as to be perfectly disengaged from it in heart and affection, it was his earnest desire entirely to renounce it long before his death, and he intended to pitch upon the Abbey of St Vanne, at Verdun, for the place of his retirement. But he was diverted from carrying this project into execution by the advice of Richard, the holy abbot of that house. He had married St Cunegonda, but lived with her in perpetual chastity, to which they had mutually bound themselves by vow. It happened that the empress was falsely accused of incontinency, and St Henry was somewhere moved by the slander; but she cleared herself by her oath and by the ordeal trials, walking over twelve red-hot ploughshares without hurt. Her husband severely condemned himself for his credulity and made her the most ample satisfaction. In his last illness he recommended her to her relations and friends, declaring that he left her an untouched virgin. His health decayed some years before his death, which happened at the castle of Grone, near Halberstadt, in 1024, on the 14th of July, toward the end of the fifty-second year of his life, he having reigned twenty-two years from his election, and ten years and five months from his coronation at Rome. His body was interred in the cathedral at Bamberg with the greatest pomp, and with the unfeigned tears of all his subjects. The great number of miracles by which God was pleased to declare his glory in

heaven procured his canonization, which was performed by Eugenius III in 1152. His festival is kept on the day following that of his death.

### ST SWITHIN OR SWITHUN, CONFESSOR, BISHOP AND PATRON OF WINCHESTER

THIS city had been famous in the time of the Romans and a station of their troops, being called by Ptolemy and Antoninus, Venta. It became afterwards the chief seat of the West-Saxon kings. Among these, Kynegils, having received the faith about 635, gave to St Birinus the city of Dorchester for his episcopal see, but founded a church at Winchester, which was dedicated by St Birinus to St Peter, according to the Saxon Chronicle, or to the Holy Trinity, according to Thomas Rudburn, Wini, the third bishop of the West-Saxons, fixed his see at Winchester, and this church became one of the most flourishing cathedrals of all Britain. St Swithun, called in the original Saxon language Swithum, received in this church the clerical tonsure, and put on the monastic habit in the Old Monastery which had been founded by King Kynegils. He was of noble parentage, passed his youth in innocent simplicity, and in the study of grammar, philosophy, and the holy scriptures. He was an accomplished model of all virtues when he was promoted to holy orders by Helinstan or Helmstan, Bishop of Winchester.

Being ordained priest, he was made provost or dean of the Old Monastery. His learning, piety, and prudence moved Egbert, king of the West-Saxons, to make him his priest, under which title the saint subscribed a charter granted to the Abbey of Croyland in 833. That great prince committed to his care the education of his son Ethelwolf, and made use of his counsels in the government of his kingdom. A degeneracy of manners had crept into the courts of the Mercians and Northumbrains, and their government was weakened by intestine divisions and several revolutions. Egbert having first vanquished Swithred, King of the East-Saxons, and added his kingdom to his own, upon several provocations, invaded Mercia and conquered it in 828, but soon after restored Withlaf, whom he had expelled, to the throne of that kingdom on condition he should hold the crown of him and pay him an annual tribute. He treated in the same manner Eandred, the last King of the Northumbers, and made him tributary, after he had with a great army laid waste that province. The kingdom of the East Angles submitted to him about the same time with Mercia, with which it had been long engaged in war, and was thereby reduced to extreme poverty. Kent being at that time tributary to Mercia, it fell also to the share of the conqueror. After this Egbert assembled all the great men of his kingdom, both clergy and laity, in a council at Winchester, in which he enacted that this kingdom should ever after be

called England, and all its subjects Englishmen. At the same time he was again crowned, and from that year, 829, was styled King of England. Thus were the names of Saxons and Jutes abolished among us, and an end was put to the heptarchy, or division of this nation into seven kingdoms, which began to be formed by Hengist in 457, when he took the title of king, seven years after his arrival in this island in 449. Towards the latter end of Egbert's reign the Danes first began to infest England. This general name historians give to those shoals of pirates which were composed not only of Danes, but also Norwegians, Goths, Sweones or Swedes, and Vandals, as Eginhard, Henry of Huntingdon, and others assure us.

King Egbert reigned thirty-seven years over the West-Saxons, and nine years over all England, dying in the year 830, or according to others in 837. Ethelwolf, his only surviving son, had been educated in piety and learning under the care of St Swithin, then provost of the Old Monastery in Winchester, and had been ordained subdeacon by Bishop Helmstan, as Rudburn, Huntingdon, and others relate. But upon the death of his elder brother, whose name is not known, he was dispensed with by Pope Leo to marry, and returning again to a secular life, helped his father in his wars, and after his death was advanced to the throne. He married Osberge, a lady of remarkable piety, and had four sons by her, Ethelbald, Ethelbright, Ethelred, and Alfred. He governed his kingdom by the prudent advice of Alstan, Bishop of Sherborne, in temporal affairs; and by that of St Swithin in ecclesiastical matters, especially those which concerned his own soul. And though the king was a slow disposition, yet by the assistance of these worthy counsellors, he reigned prudently and happily; the Danes were often repulsed, and many noble designs for the good of the church and state were begun, and prosperously executed. Bearing always the greatest reverence to St Swithin, whom he called his master and teacher, he procured him, upon the death of Helmstan, to be chosen Bishop of Winchester, to which see he was consecrated by Ceolnoth, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 852. Hearne has given us the profession of faith which he made on that occasion, according to custom, in the hands of the archbishop.<sup>1</sup> William of Malmesbury says, that though this good bishop was a rich treasure of all virtues, those in which he took most delight were humility and charity to the poor; and in the discharge of his episcopal functions he omitted nothing belonging to a true pastor. He built divers churches and repaired others; and made his journeys on foot, accompanied with his clerks, and often by night to avoid ostentation. Being to dedicate any church, he with all humility used to go barefoot to the place. His feasting was not with the rich, but with the needy and the poor. His mouth was always open to invite sinners to repentance, and to admonish those that stood to beware of falling. He was most severe to himself, and

<sup>1</sup> Hearne, *Teat. Roffens.* p. 269.

abstemious in his diet, never eating to satisfy his appetite, but barely to sustain nature; and as to sleep, he admitted no more than what after long watching and much labour was absolutely necessary. He was always delighted with psalms and spiritual canticles, and in conversation would bear no discourse but what tended to edification.

By his counsel and advice King Ethelwolf, in a Mycel synod or great council of the nation in 854, enacted a new law by which he gave the tithes or tenth part of his land throughout the kingdom to the church, exempt and free from all taxations and burthens, with an obligation of prayers in all churches for ever for his own soul, on every Wednesday, &c. This charter, to give it a more sacred sanction, he offered on the altar of St Peter at Rome in the pilgrimage which he made to that city in 855. He likewise procured it to be confirmed by the pope.<sup>1</sup> He carried with him to Rome his youngest and best beloved son Alfred, rebuilt there the school for the English, and ordered to be sent every year to Rome one hundred mancuses for the pope, one hundred for the Church of St Peter, and as much for that of St Paul, to furnish them with lights on Easter Eve. He extended the Romescot or Peterpence to his whole kingdom. He reigned two years after his return from Rome, and died in 857. He ordained, that throughout all his own hereditary lands, every ten families shall maintain one poor person with meat, drink and apparel; from whence came the Corrodies which still remain in divers places. St Swithin departed to eternal bliss, which he had always thirsted after, on the 2nd of July 862, in the reign of King Ethelbert. His body was buried, according to his order, in the churchyard, where his grave might be trodden on by passengers.

About one hundred years after, in the days of King Edgar, his relics were taken up by St Ethelwold, then Bishop of Winchester, and translated into the church in 964. On which occasion Malmesbury affirms that such a number of miraculous cures of all kinds were wrought, as was never in the memory of man known to have been in any other place. Lanfrid, in the original Saxon Lantfred, called by Leland an illustrious doctor, being then a monk at Winchester, wrote in 980 a history of this translation, and of the miraculous cures of a blind man, and many others through the intercession of this saint; which history has never been printed: though we have two beautiful fair manuscript copies of it, the one in the Cotton, the other in the king's library in the inclosure of Westminster Abbey. In the reign of William the Conqueror, Walkelyn, Bishop of Winchester, a Norman, and the king's relation, laid the foundation of the new church in 1079, which he lived to finish with the abbey, so that in 1093 the monks, in the presence of almost all the bishops and abbots of England, came in great joy from the old to the new monastery, and on the feast

<sup>1</sup> See Ingulph. Asser. Redborne.

of St Swithin, the shrine of this saint was in another solemn procession translated from the old to the new church; and on the next day the bishop's men began to demolish the old abbey. William of Wykeham, the celebrated chancellor of England in the reign of Edward III and founder of New College, Oxford, in 1379, added the nave and west front to this cathedral which is now standing. This church was first dedicated to the Holy Trinity under the patronage of St Peter; afterwards by St Ethelwold, in presence of King Etheldred, St Dunstan, and eight other bishops, to St Swithin, as Rudburn relates in 980.<sup>1</sup> King Henry VIII, in 1540, commanded this cathedral to be called no longer St Swithin's, but of the Holy Trinity.

St Swithin is commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on the 2nd of July, which was the day of his death; but his chief festival in England was on the 15th of the same month, the day of the translation of his relics.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 15 :*

ST HENRY II, Emperor, 1024, surnamed "the pious" and "the lame," of near kin to the three first emperors who bore the name of Otho : ST PLECHELM, Bishop, Apostle of Guelderland : ST SWITHIN, Bishop and patron of Winchester, by whose counsel King Ethelwold extended the Peter's Pence to the whole of his kingdom.

## JULY 16

### ST EUSTATHIUS, CONFESSOR, PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH

(A.D. 338)

[From St Athanasius, Sozomen, Theodoret, lib. i. Hist. c. 6; St Jerom, in Catal. c. 85. See Tillem. t. vii. p. 21; Ceillier, t. iv., and the Bollandists; Bosch in his life, t. iv. Jul. p. 130; and Solier in Hist. Chron. Patr. Antioch. ante, t. iv. Jul. p. 35.]

ST EUSTATHIUS was a native of Sida, in Pamphylia, and with heroic constancy confessed the faith of Christ before the pagan persecutors, as St Athanasius assures us,<sup>2</sup> though it does not appear whether this happened under Diocletian or Licinius. He was learned, eloquent, and eminently endowed with all virtue, especially an ardent zeal for the purity of our holy faith. Being made Bishop of Beræa, in Syria, he began in that obscure see, to be highly considered in the church insomuch that St Alexander, of Alexandria, wrote to him in particular against Arius and his impious writings, in 323. St Philogonius, Bishop of Antioch, a prelate illustrious for his confession of the faith in the persecution of Lincinius, died in 323. One Paulinus succeeded him, but seems a man not equal to the functions of that high station; for, during the short time he governed that church, tares began to grow up among the good seed. To root these out, when that dignity became again vacant, in 324, the zeal and abilities of St Eustathius were called for, and he was accordingly translated to this

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Major Winton, p. 223. Vita metrice St Swithuni per Wolstanum monachum Winton. ib. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Arian. ad Monachos, p. 346.

see, in dignity next to Alexandria, and the third in the world. He vigorously opposed the motion, but was compelled to acquiesce. Indeed, translations of bishops, if made without cogent reasons of necessity, become, to many, dangerous temptations of ambition or avarice, and open a door to those fatal vices into the sanctuary. To put a bar to this evil, St Eustathius, in the same year, assisting at the general council of Nice, zealously concurred with his fellow-bishops to forbid, for the time to come, all removals of bishops from one see to another.<sup>1</sup> The new patriarch distinguished himself in that venerable assembly by his zeal against Arianism. Soon after his return to Antioch he held a council there, to unite his church, which he found divided by factions. He was very strict and severe in examining into the characters of those whom he admitted into the clergy, and he constantly rejected all those whose principles, faith, or manners, appeared suspected: among whom were several who became afterwards ringleaders of Arianism. Amidst his external employs for the service of others, he did not forget that charity must always begin at home, and he laboured in the first place to sanctify his own soul; but, after watering his own garden, he did not confine the stream there, but let it flow abroad to enrich the neighbouring soil, and to dispense plenty and fruitfulness all around. He sent into other dioceses, that were subject to his patriarchate, men capable of instructing and encouraging the faithful. Eusebius, Archbishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine (which church was, in some measure subject to Antioch), favoured the new heresy in such a manner as to alarm the zeal of our saint. This raised a violent storm against him.

Eusebius, of Nicomedia, laid a deep plot with his Arian friends to remove St Eustathius from Antioch, who had attacked Eusebius of Cæsarea, and accused him of altering the Nicene Creed. Hereupon, Eusebius of Nicomedia, pretending a great desire to see the city of Jerusalem, set out in great state, taking with him his confidant, Theognis of Nice. At Jerusalem they met Eusebius of Cæsarea, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, Aëtius of Lydda, Theodotus of Laodicea, and several others, all of the Arian faction, who returned with them to Antioch. There they assembled together, as in a synod, in 331, and a debauched woman whom the Arians had suborned, coming in, showed a child which she suckled at her breast, and declared that she had it by Eustathius. The saint protested his innocence and alleged that the apostle forbids a priest to be condemned unless convicted by two or more witnesses. This woman, before her death, after a long illness, called in a great number of the clergy and publicly declared to them the innocence of the holy bishop, and confessed that the Arians had given her money for this action, pretending that no perjury was implied in her oath, upon the frivolous and foolish plea that she had the child by a brazier of the city, called Eustathius.<sup>2</sup> The Arians accused

<sup>1</sup> Conc. Nicæn. Can. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Theodoret, lib. i. c. 20, 21; St Hier. lib. iii. in *Ruffin*, &c.

him also of Sabellianism, as Socrates and others testify; this being their general charge and slander against all who professed the orthodox faith.

The Catholic bishops who were present with Eustathius cried out loudly against the injustice of these proceedings, but could not be heard, and the Arians pronounced a sentence of deposition against the saint; and Eusebius of Nicomedia, and Theognis, hastened to inform the Emperor Constantine of these proceedings. The Arian bishops invited Eusebius of Cæsarea, to exchange his see for the patriarchal chair of Antioch, but he alleged the prohibition of the canons; and the Emperor Constantine commended his modesty by a letter which Eusebius has inserted in his life of that prince.<sup>1</sup> We should have been more edified with his humility had this circumstance been only recorded by others.<sup>2</sup> This happened, not in 340, as Baronius and Petavius imagine, but in 330 or 331, as is manifest not only from the testimony of Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Philostorgius, but also from several circumstances of the affair.<sup>3</sup> The people of Antioch raised a great sedition on this occasion, but the Emperor Constantine, being prepossessed by the slanders of the two bishops, ordered St Eustathius to repair to Constantinople, and thence sent him into banishment. The holy pastor assembled the people before his departure from Antioch, and exhorted them to remain steadfast in the true doctrine: which exhortations were of great weight in preserving many in the Catholic faith. St Eustathius was banished with several priests and deacons first into Thrace, as St Jerom and St Chrysostom testify, and from thence into Illyricum, as Theodoret adds. Socrates and Sozomen confound him with a priest of Constantinople of the same name, when they tell us he was recalled by Jovian, and survived till the year 370: for St Eustathius died thirty years before St Meletius was advanced to the see of Antioch in 360, as Theodoret testifies. Nor was he mentioned in the council of Sardica, or in any of the disputes that followed; and our best critics and historians conclude him to have been dead in 337. Philippi, in Macedon, which, in the division of the empire into dioceses, was comprised in that of Illyricum, was the place of his death,<sup>4</sup> but his body was interred at Trajanopolis, in Thrace, from which city Calandion, one of his successors, caused it to be translated to Antioch, about the year 482, as Theodorus Lector informs us.

A Christian suffering with patience and joy, bears in spirit the nearest resemblance to his crucified Master, and enters deepest into his most perfect sentiments of humility, meekness, and love; for Jesus on his cross is the model by which his disciples are bound to form themselves, which they

<sup>1</sup> Eus. lib. iv. de Vit. Constant. c. 61, p. 318.

<sup>2</sup> Sozom. lib. ii. c. 19, p. 469.

<sup>3</sup> See Tillemont, Ceillier, Cave, Hist. Littér. p. 187, t. 1., and Solier, the Bollandist, Hist. Patr. Ant. c. 24, p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Theodoret, lib. i. c. 20; Theodorus L., tor. lib. ii. c. 1, p. 547; Theophanes, p. 114. See Tillem. note 4, p. 653.



nowhere can do with greater advantage than when they are in a like state of desolation and suffering.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 16 :*

OUR BLESSED LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL : ST ELIER or HELIER, hermit in the Isle of Jersey, martyred there by infidels. Held in singular veneration since his holy death : ST EUSTATHIUS, Patriarch of Antioch, who confessed the faith with heroic constancy before his pagan persecutors.

## JULY 17

## ST ALEXIUS, CONFESSOR

(IN THE FIFTH CENTURY)

[From Joseph the Younger, in a poem of the ninth age, divided into Odes, an anonymous writer of his Life in the tenth century, noted by the Bollandists, a homily of St Adalbert, Bishop of Prague, and martyr, of the same age, and from other monuments, free from later interpolations ; on all which see Pinius the Bollandist, t. iv. Julij, p. 239, who confutes at large the groundless and inconsistent surmises of Baillet. Above all, see Nerinio, Abbot of the Hieronymites, at Rome, who has fully vindicated the memory of St Alexis in his Dissertation *De Templo et Cœnobio, SS. Bonifacii et Alexii*, in 4to, Romæ, 1752. On his Chaldaic Acts, see Jos. Assemani. ad 17 Martii, in *Calend. Univ.* t. vi. pp. 187, 189 ; and *Bibl. Orient.* t. i. p. 401.]

ST ALEXIUS or ALEXIS is a perfect model of the most generous contempt of the world. He was the only son of a rich senator of Rome, born and educated in that capital in the fifth century. From the charitable example of his pious parents he learned, from his tender years, that the riches which are given away to the poor, remain with us for ever ; and that alms-deeds are a treasure transferred to heaven, with the interest of an immense reward. And whilst yet a child, not content to give all he could, he left nothing unattempted to compass or solicit the relief of all whom he saw in distress. But the manner in which he dealt about his liberal alms was still a greater proof of the noble sentiments of virtue with which his soul was fired ; for by this he showed that he thought himself most obliged to those who received his charity, and regarded them as his greatest benefactors. The more he enlarged his views of eternity and raised his thoughts and desires to the bright scene of immortal bliss, the more did he daily despise all earthly toys ; for, when once the soul is thus upon the wing, and soars upwards, how does the glory of this world lessen in her eye ! and how does she condemn the empty pageantry of all that worldlings call great !

Fearing lest the fascination, or at least the distraction of temporal honours might at length divide or draw his heart too much from those only noble and great objects, he entertained thoughts of renouncing the advantages of his birth, and retiring from the more dangerous part of the world. Having, in compliance with the will of his parents, married a rich and virtuous lady, he on the very day of the nuptials, making use of the liberty which the laws of God and his church give a person before the marriage be consummated, of preferring a more perfect state, secretly withdrew, in order to break all the ties which held him in the world.

In disguise he travelled into a distant country, embraced extreme poverty, and resided in a hut adjoining to a church, dedicated to the Mother of God. Being, after some time there, discovered to be a stranger of distinction, he returned home, and being received as a poor pilgrim, lived some time unknown in his father's house, bearing the contumely and ill-treatment of the servants with invincible patience and silence. A little before he died, he by a letter discovered himself to his parents. He flourished in the reign of the Emperor Honorius, Innocent the First being Bishop of Rome; and is honoured in the calendars of the Latins, Greeks, Syrians, Marionites, and Armenians. His interment was celebrated with the greatest pomp by the whole city of Rome, on the Aventin Hill. His body was found there in 1216, in the ancient Church of St Boniface, whilst Honorius III sat in St Peter's chair, and at this day is the most precious treasure of a sumptuous church on the same spot, which bears his name jointly with that of St Boniface, gives title to a cardinal, and is in the hands of the Hieronymites.<sup>1</sup>

The extraordinary paths in which the Holy Ghost is pleased sometimes to conduct certain privileged souls are rather to be admired than imitated. If it cost them so much to seek humiliations, how diligently ought we to make a good use of those at least which Providence sends us! It is only by humbling ourselves on all occasions that we can walk in the path of true humility and root out of our hearts all secret pride. The poison of this vice infects all states and conditions: it often lurks undiscovered in the foldings of the heart even after a man has got the mastery over all his other passions. Pride always remains even for the most perfect principally to fight against; and unless we watch continually against it, nothing will remain sound or untainted in our lives; this vice will creep even into our best actions, infect the whole circle of our lives, and become a main spring of all the motions of our heart; and what is the height of our misfortune, the deeper its wounds are, the more is the soul stupified by its venom, and the less capable is she of feeling her most grievous disease and spiritual death. St John Climacus writes,<sup>2</sup> that when a young novice was rebuked for his pride, he said, "Pardon me, father, I am not proud." To whom the experienced director replied, "And how could you give me a surer proof of your pride than by not seeing it yourself?"

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 17 :*

ST ALEXIUS, in the fifth century, a perfect model of generous contempt of the world, much honoured in the East : THE BLESSED CARMELITE NUNS OF COMPIEGNE, martyrs : ST ENNODIUS, Bishop of Pavia, chosen by Pope Hormisdas to try to effect the union of the Eastern to the Western Church : ST MARCELLINA, virgin, eldest sister to St Ambrose : ST SPERATUS AND HIS COMPANIONS, called THE SCILLITAN MARTYRS and ST TURNINUS, a holy Irish monk who with St Folan, came to the Netherlands and laboured for the Gospel especially in Antwerp.

<sup>1</sup> The incident in the life of St Alexius related above, forms the subject of the well-known drama "The Hidden Gem" by Cardinal Wiseman.

<sup>2</sup> Gr. xxii. p. 548.

JULY 18

## ST SYMPHOROSA, AND HER SEVEN SONS, MARTYRS

(A.D. 120)

[From their genuine Acts in Ruinart, c. 18. Some manuscripts attribute them to the celebrated Julius Africanus, who wrote a chronology from the beginning of the world to the reign of Heliogabalus, now lost, but commended by Eusebius as an exact and finished work. See Ceillier, t. i. p. 668.]

TRAJAN's persecution, in some degree, continued during the first year of Adrian's reign, whence Sulpicius Severus places the fourth general persecution under this emperor. However, he put a stop to it about the year 124, moved probably both by the apologies of Quadratus and Aristides, and by a letter which Serenius Granianus, proconsul of Asia, had writ to him in favour of the Christians. Nay, he had Christ in veneration not as the Saviour of the world, but as a wonder or novelty, and kept his image together with that of Apollonius Tyanæus. This God was pleased to permit that his afflicted church might enjoy some respite. It was, however, again involved in the disgrace which the Jews (with whom the pagans at these times in some degree confounded the Christians) drew upon themselves by their rebellion, which gave occasion to the last entire destruction of Jerusalem in 134. Then, as St Paulinus informs us,<sup>1</sup> Adrian caused a statue of Jupiter to be erected on the place where Christ rose from the dead, and a marble Venus on the place of his crucifixion; and at Bethlehem,<sup>2</sup> a grotto consecrated in honour of Adonis, or Thammuz, to whom he also dedicated the cave where Christ was born. This prince, towards the end of his reign, abandoned himself more than ever to acts of cruelty; and, being awaked by a fit of superstition, he again drew his sword against the innocent flock of Christ. He built a magnificent country palace at Tibur, now Tivoli, sixteen miles from Rome, upon the most agreeable banks of the river Anio, now called Teverone. Here he placed whatever could be procured most curious out of all the provinces. Having finished the building, he intended to dedicate it by heathenish ceremonies, which he began by offering sacrifices, in order to induce the idols to deliver their oracles. The demons answered, "The widow, Simphorosa, and her seven sons daily torment us by invoking their God; if they sacrifice, we promise to be favourable to your vows."

This lady lived, with her seven sons, upon a plentiful estate which they enjoyed at Tivoli, and she liberally expended her treasures in assisting the poor, especially in relieving the Christians that suffered for the faith. She was widow of St Getulius, or Zoticus, who had been crowned with martyrdom with his brother, Amantius. They were both tribunes of legions or colonels in the army, and are honoured among the martyrs on the 10th of June. Symphorosa had buried their bodies in her own farm and, sighing

<sup>1</sup> St Paulin. Ep. 11, ad Sever.

<sup>2</sup> St Hieron. Ep. 18, ad Paul.

to see her sons and herself united with them in immortal bliss, she prepared herself to follow them by the most fervent exercise of all good works.

Adrian, whose superstition was alarmed at this answer of his gods, or their priests, ordered her and her sons to be seized and brought before him. She came with joy in her countenance, praying all the way for herself and her children that God would grant them the grace to confess his holy name with constancy. The emperor exhorted them at first in mild terms to sacrifice. Symphorosa answered, "My husband, Getulius and his brother Amantius, being your tribunes, have suffered divers torments for the name of Jesus Christ rather than sacrifice to idols, and they have vanquished your demons by their death, choosing to be beheaded rather than to be overcome. The death they suffered drew upon them ignominy among men, but glory among the angels; and they now enjoy eternal life in heaven." The emperor, changing his voice, said to her in an angry tone, "Either sacrifice to the most powerful gods, with thy sons, or thou thyself shalt be offered up as a sacrifice together with them." Symphorosa answered, "Your gods cannot receive me as a sacrifice; but if I am burnt for the name of Jesus Christ, my death will increase the torment which your devils endure in their flames. But can I hope for so great a happiness as to be offered, with my children, a sacrifice to the true and living God?" Adrian said, "Either sacrifice to my gods, or you shall all miserably perish." Symphorosa said, "Do not imagine that fear will make me change; I am desirous to be at rest with my husband, whom you put to death for the name of Jesus Christ." The emperor then ordered her to be carried to the temple of Hercules, where she was first buffeted on the cheeks, and afterwards hung up by the hair of her head. When no torments were able to shake her invincible soul, the emperor gave orders that she should be thrown into the river with a great stone fastened about her neck. Her brother Eugenius, who was one of the chief of the council of Tibur, took up her body and buried it on the road near that town.

The next day the emperor sent for her seven sons all together, and exhorted them to sacrifice and not imitate the obstinacy of their mother. He added the severest threats; but finding all to be in vain, he ordered seven stakes, with engines and pullies, to be planted round the temple of Hercules, and the pious youths to be bound upon them. Their limbs were, in this posture, tortured and stretched in such manner, that the bones were disjoined in all parts of their bodies. The young noblemen, far from yielding under the violence of their tortures, were encouraged by each other's example, and seemed more eager to suffer than the executioners were to torment. At length, the emperor commanded them to be put to death, in the same place where they were, different ways. The eldest, called Crescens, had his throat cut; the second, called Julian, was stabbed in the breast; Nemesius, the third, was pierced with a lance in his heart;

Primitivus received his wound in the belly, Justin in the back, Stacteus on his sides, and Eugenius, the youngest, died by his body being cleft asunder into two parts across his breast from the head downwards. The emperor came the next day to the temple of Hercules, and gave orders for a deep hole to be dug, and all the bodies of these martyrs to be thrown into it. The place was called by the heathen priest, *The seven Biothanati*; which word signifieth, in Greek and in the style of art magic, such as die by a violent death, particularly such as were put to the torture. After this, a stop was put to the persecution for about eighteen months; during which interval of peace, the Christians took up the remains of these martyrs, and interred them with honour on the Tiburtin road in the midway between Tivoli and Rome, where still are seen some remains of a church erected in memory of them, in a place called, to this day, *The seven Brothers*. Their bodies were translated, by a pope called Stephen, into the Church of the Holy Angel, in the fish-market in Rome, where they were found in the pontificate of Pius IV, with an inscription on a plate which mentioned this translation.<sup>1</sup>

St Symphorosa set not before the eyes of her children the advantages of their riches and birth, or of their father's honourable employments and great exploits, but those of his piety and the triumph of his martyrdom. She continually entertained them on the glory of heaven and the happiness of treading in the steps of our Divine Redeemer, by the practice of humility, patience, resignation and charity, which virtues are best learned in the path of humiliations and sufferings. In these a Christian finds this solid treasure, and his unalterable peace and joy both in life and death.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 18 :*

ST ARNOUL, Bishop of Metz, who adorned the Court of King Clotaire the Great : another ST ARNOUL, who preached the faith among the Franks and was martyred in the Aquilin Forest about 534 : ST BRUNO, Bishop : ST FREDERICK, Bishop and martyr of Utrecht, renowned for his fasting and watching in prayer : ST ODULPH, Canon of Utrecht, who ever exhorted all men to the Divine love and to contempt of earthly things : ST PHILASTRIUS, Bishop of Brescia : ST SYMPHOROSA AND HER SEVEN SONS, martyred under Trajan's persecution, 120.

## JULY 19

### ST VINCENT OF PAUL, CONFESSOR, FOUNDER OF THE LAZARITES, OR FATHERS OF THE MISSION

(A.D. 1660)

[From his edifying life written by Abelly, Bishop of Rodez, and again by the celebrated continuator of Tournely's Theological Lectures, Dr Peter Collet, in two volumes, quarto, Nancy, 1748. See also Perrault, *Hommes Illustr.* : Helyot, *Hist. des Ord. Relig.* t. viii. p. 64, and the bull of his canonization published by Clement XII in 1737, *apud Beaud.* XIV de *canonis.* t. iv. Append. p. 363.]

EVEN in the most degenerate ages, when the true maxims of the gospel seem almost obliterated among the generality of those who profess it,

<sup>1</sup> Ado, Usuard ; Mart. Rom. cum notis Baronii et Labin.

God fails not, for the glory of his holy name, to raise to himself faithful ministers to revive the same in the hearts of many. Having, by the perfect crucifixion of the old man in their hearts, and the gift of prayer prepared them to become vessels of his grace, he replenishes them with the spirit of his apostles, that they may be qualified to conduct others in the paths of heroic virtue, in which the Holy Ghost was himself their interior Master. One of these instruments of the divine mercy was St Vincent of Paul. He was a native of Pouli, a village near Acqs, in Gascony, not far from the Pyrenæan mountains. His parents, William of Paul and Bertranda of Morass, occupied a very small farm, of which they were the proprietors; and upon the produce of which they brought up a family of four sons and two daughters. The children were brought up in innocence, and inured from their infancy to the most laborious part of country labour. But Vincent, the third son, gave extraordinary proofs of his wit and capacity, and from his infancy showed a seriousness and an affection for holy prayer far beyond his age. He spent a great part of his time in that exercise when he was employed in the fields to keep the cattle. That he might give to Christ, in the persons of the poor, all that was in his power, he deprived himself of his own little conveniences and necessities for that purpose, in whatever it was possible for him to retrench from his own use. This early fervent consecration of himself to God, and these little sacrifices, which may be compared to the widow's two mites in the gospel, were indications of the sincere ardour with which he began to seek God from the first opening of his reason, to know and love him; and were doubtless a means to draw down upon him, from the author of these graces, other greater blessings. His father was determined, by the strong inclinations of the child to learning and piety, and the quickness of his parts, to procure him a school education. He placed him first under the care of the Cordeliers, or Franciscan friars, at Acqs, paying for his board and lodging the small pension of sixty French livres, that is, not six pounds English, a year.

Vincent had been four years at the schools when Mr Commet, a gentleman of that town, being much taken with his virtue and prudence, chose him sub-preceptor to his children, and enabled him to continue his studies without being any longer a burden to his parents. At twenty years of age, in 1596, he was qualified to go to the university of Toulouse, where he spent seven years in the study of divinity, and commenced bachelor in that faculty. In that city he was promoted to the holy orders of sub-deacon and deacon in 1598, and of priesthood in 1600, having received the tonsure and minor orders a few days before he left Acqs. He seemed already endowed with all those virtues which make up the character of a worthy and zealous minister of the altar; yet he knew not the full extent of heroic entire self-denial by which a man becomes dead and crucified to all inordinate self-will; upon which perfect self-denial are engrafted the

total sacrifice of the heart to God, perfect humility, and that purity and ardour of divine charity which constitute the saint. Vincent was a good proficient in theology, and other sciences of the schools, and had diligently applied himself to the study of the maxims of Christian virtue in the gospel, in the lives of the saints, and in the doctrine of the greatest masters of a spiritual life. But there remained a new science for him to learn, which was to cost him much more than bare study and labour. This consists in perfect experimental and feeling sentiments of humility, patience, meekness, and charity; which science is only to be learned by the good use of severe interior and exterior trials. This is the mystery of the cross, unknown to those whom the Holy Ghost has not led into this important secret of his conduct, in preparing souls for the great works of his grace.

The saint went to Marseilles in 1605, to receive a legacy of five hundred crowns which had been left him by a friend who died in that city. Intending to return to Toulouse, he set out in a felucca, or large boat, from Marseilles to Narbonne, but was met in the way by three brigantines of African pirates. The infidels, seeing the Christians refuse to strike their flag, charged them with great fury, and on the first onset killed three of their men, and wounded every one of the rest; Vincent received a shot of an arrow. The Christians were soon obliged to surrender. The first thing the Mahometans did was to cut the captain in pieces because he had not struck at the first summons, and in the combat had killed one of their men and four or five slaves. The rest they put in chains; and continued seven or eight days longer on that coast, committing several other piracies, but sparing the lives of those that made no resistance. When they had got a sufficient booty they sailed for Barbary. Upon landing they drew up an act of their seizure, in which they falsely declared that Vincent and his companions had been taken on board of a Spanish vessel, that the French consul might not challenge them. Then they gave to every slave a pair of loose breeches, a linen jerkin, and a bonnet. In this garb they were led five or six times through the city of Tunis to be shown; after which they were brought back to their vessel, where the merchants came to see them, as men do at the sale of a horse or an ox. They examined who could eat well, felt their sides, looked at their teeth, to see who were of scorbutic habits of body, consequently unlikely for very long life; they probed their wounds, and made them walk and run in all paces, lift up burdens, and wrestle, to judge of their strength. Vincent was bought by a fisherman who, finding that he could not bear the sea, soon sold him again to an old physician, a great chemist and extractor of essences, who had spent fifty years in search of the pretended philosopher's stone. He was humane, and loved Vincent exceedingly; but gave him long lectures on his alchemy and on the Mahometan law, to which he used his utmost efforts to bring him over; promising, on that condition, to leave him all his riches, and

to communicate to him what he valued much more than his estate, all the secrets of his pretended science. Vincent feared the danger of his soul much more than all the hardships of his slavery, and most earnestly implored the divine assistance against it, recommending himself particularly to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to which he ever after attributed his victory over this temptation. He lived with this old man from September 1605 to August 1606, when, by this physician's death, he fell to the share of a nephew of his master, a true man-hater. By resignation to the divine will and confidence in providence, he enjoyed a sweet repose in his own heart under all accidents, hardships, and dangers; and by assiduous devout meditation on the sufferings of Christ, learned to bear all his afflictions with comfort and joy, uniting himself in spirit with his Divine Redeemer, and studying to copy in himself his lessons of perfect meekness, patience, silence, and charity. This new master sold him in a short time to a renegade Christian, who came from Nice, in Savoy. This man sent him to his *temat*, or farm, situate on a hot desert mountain. This apostate had three wives, of which one, who was a Turkish woman, went often to the field where Vincent was digging, and out of curiosity would ask him to sing the praises of God. He used to sing to her, with tears in his eyes, the psalm, "Upon the Rivers of Babylon," &c., the "Salve Regina," and such like prayers. She was so much taken with our holy faith and doubtless with the saintly deportment of the holy slave that she never ceased repeating to her husband that he had basely abandoned the only true religion, till, like another Caiaphas or ass of Balaam, without opening her own eyes to the faith she made him enter into himself. Sincerely repenting of his apostasy, he agreed with Vincent to make their escape together. They crossed the Mediterranean sea in a small light boat which the least squall of wind would overset; and they landed safe at Aigues-Mortes, near Marseilles, on the 28th of June 1607, and thence proceeded to Avignon. The apostate made his abjuration in the hands of the vice-legat, and the year following went with Vincent to Rome, and there entered himself a penitent in the austere convent of the Fate-Ben-Fratelli, who served the hospitals according to the rule of St John of God.

Vincent received great comfort at the sight of a place most venerable for its pre-eminence in the church, which has been watered with the blood of so many martyrs, and is honoured with the tombs of the two great apostles SS. Peter and Paul and many other saints. He was moved to tears at the remembrance of their zeal, fortitude, humility, and charity, and often devoutly visited their monuments, praying earnestly that he might be so happy as to walk in their steps and imitate their virtues. After a short stay at Rome, to satisfy his devotion, he returned to Paris and took up his quarters in the suburb of St Germain's. There lodged in the same house a gentleman, the judge of a village near Bordeaux, who



happened to be robbed of four hundred crowns. He charged Vincent with the theft, thinking it could be nobody else; and in this persuasion he spoke against him with the greatest virulence among all his friends and wherever he went. Vincent calmly denied the fact, saying "God knows the truth." He bore this slander six years, without making any other defence or using harsh words or complaints, till the true thief being taken up at Bordeaux on another account, to appease his own conscience and clear the innocent, he sent for this judge and confessed to him the crime. St Vincent related this in a spiritual conference with his priests, but as of a third person; to show that patience, humble silence, and resignation are generally the best defence of our innocence, and always the happiest means of sanctifying our souls under slanders and persecution; and we may be assured that Providence will in its proper time justify us, if expedient.

At Paris Vincent became acquainted with the holy priest Monsieur de Berulle, who was afterwards cardinal, and at that time was taken up in founding the congregation of the French Oratory. A saint readily discovers a soul in which the spirit of God reigns. Berulle conceived a great esteem for St Vincent from his first conversation with him; and to engage him in the service of his neighbour, he prevailed with him first to serve as curate of the parish of Clichy, a small village near Paris; and soon after to quit that employ to take upon him the charge of preceptor to the children of Emmanuel de Gondy, Count of Joigny, general of the galleys of France. His lady, Frances of Silly, a person of singular piety, was so taken with the sanctity of Vincent that she chose him for her spiritual director and confessor. In the year 1616, whilst the Countess of Joigny was at a country seat at Folleville, in the diocese of Amiens, Vincent was sent for to the village of Gannes, two leagues from Folleville, to hear the confession of a countryman who lay dangerously ill. The zealous priest, by carefully examining his penitent, found it necessary to advise him to make a general confession, with which the other joyfully complied. The penitent by this means discovered that all his former confessions had been sacrilegious for want of a due examination of his conscience; and afterwards, bathed in tears, he declared aloud, in transports of joy before many persons and the Countess of Joigny herself, that he should have been eternally lost if he had not spoken to Vincent. The pious lady was struck with dread and horror to hear of such past sacrileges, and to consider the imminent danger of being damned in which that poor soul had been; and she trembled lest some others among her vassals might have the misfortune to be in the like case. The virtuous countess felt in her own breast the strongest alarms for so many poor souls, which she called her own by many titles. She therefore entreated Vincent to preach in the Church of Folleville, on the feast of the Conversion of St Paul, in 1617, and fully to instruct the people in the great duty of repentance and confession of sins. He did so;

and such crowds flocked to him to make general confessions that he was obliged to call in the Jesuits of Amiens to his assistance. The congregation of the mission dates its first institution from this time, and, in thanksgiving for it, keeps the 25th of January with great solemnity.

By the advice of Monsieur de Berulle, St Vincent left the house of the countess in 1617 to employ his talents among the common people in the villages of Bresse, where he heard they stood in great need of instruction. He prevailed upon five other zealous priests to bear him company, and with them formed a little community in the parish of Chatillon in that province. He there converted by his sermons the Count of Rougemont and many others from their scandalous unchristian lives to a state of eminent penance and fervour, and in a short time changed the whole face of the country.<sup>1</sup> The good countess, his patroness, was infinitely pleased with his success, and gave him sixteen thousand livres to found a perpetual mission among the common people in the place and manner he should think fit. But she could not be easy herself whilst she was deprived of his direction and advice; she therefore employed Monsieur de Berulle, and her brother-in-law, Cardinal de Retz, to prevail with him to come to her, and extorted from him a promise that he would never abandon the direction of her conscience so long as she lived, and that he would assist her at her death. But being extremely desirous that others, especially those who were particularly entitled to her care and attention, should want nothing that could contribute to their sanctification and salvation, she induced her husband to concur with her in establishing a company of able and zealous missionaries who should be employed in assisting their vassals and farmers. This project they proposed to their brother, John Francis of Gondi, the first Archbishop of Paris, and he gave the college of Bons Enfants for the reception of the new community. All things being agreed on, St Vincent took possession of this house in April 1625. The count and countess gave forty thousand French livres to begin the foundation.

St Vincent attended the countess till her pious death, which happened on the 23rd of June the same year; after which he joined his congregation. He drew up for it certain rules or constitutions which were approved by Pope Urban VIII in 1632. King Lewis XIII confirmed the establishment by letters patent, which he granted in May the same year; and, in 1633, the regular canons of St Victor gave to this new institute the Priory of St Lazarus, which being a spacious building was made the chief house of the congregation, and from it the fathers of the mission were often called Lazarites or Lazarians. They are not religious men, but a congregation of secular priests, who after two years' probation make four simple vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability. They devote them-

<sup>1</sup> Collet, t. i. b. 1, pp. 66, 71.

selves to labour, in the first place, in sanctifying their own souls by the particular holy exercises prescribed in their institute; secondly, in the conversion of sinners to God; and thirdly, in training up clergymen for the ministry of the altar and the care of souls. To attain the first end, their rule prescribes them an hour's meditation every morning, self-examination thrice every day, spiritual conferences every week, a yearly retreat of eight days, and silence except in the hours allowed for conversation. To comply with the second obligation, they are employed eight months every year in missions among the country people, staying three or four weeks in each place which they visit, every day giving catechism, making familiar sermons, hearing confessions, reconciling differences, and performing all other works of charity. To correspond with the third end which St Vincent proposed to himself, some of this congregation undertake the direction of seminaries, and admit ecclesiastics or others to make retreats of eight or ten days with them, to whom they prescribe suitable exercises; and for these purposes excellent rules are laid down by the founder. Pope Alexander VII, in 1662, enjoined by a brief that all persons who receive holy orders in Rome, or in the six suffragan bishoprics, shall first make a retreat of ten days under the direction of the fathers of this congregation, under pain of suspension. St Vincent settled his institute also in the seminary of St Charles in Paris, and lived to see twenty-five houses of it founded in France, Piedmont, Poland, and other places.

This foundation, though so extensive and beneficial, could not satisfy the zeal of this apostolic man. He by every other means studied to procure the relief of others under all necessities, whether spiritual or corporeal. For this purpose he established many other confraternities, as that called Of Charity, to attend all poor sick persons in each parish; which institute he began in Bresse, and propagated in other places where he made any missions; one called Of the Dames of the Cross, for the education of young girls; another of Dames to serve the sick in great hospitals, as in that of Hotel Dieu in Paris. He procured and directed the foundation of several great hospitals, as in Paris that of foundlings, or those children who, for want of such a provision, are exposed to the utmost distress, or to the barbarity of unnatural parents; also that of poor old men; at Marseilles the stately hospital for the galley-slaves who, when sick, are there abundantly furnished with every help both corporeal and spiritual. All these establishments he settled under excellent regulations, and supplied with large sums of money to defray all necessary expenses. He instituted a particular plan of spiritual exercises for those that are about to receive holy orders; and others for those who desire to make general confessions, or to deliberate upon the choice of a state of life. He also appointed regular ecclesiastical conferences on the duties of the clerical state, &c. It must appear almost incredible that so many and so great things could

have been effected by one man, and a man who had no advantages from birth, fortune, or any shining qualities which the world admires and esteems. But our surprise would be much greater if we could enter into a detail of his wonderful actions, and the infinite advantages which he procured others. During the wars in Lorrain, being informed of the miseries to which those provinces were reduced, he collected charities among pious persons at Paris, which were sent thither to the amount of fifteen or sixteen hundred thousand livres, says Abelly; nay, as Collet proves from authentic vouchers, of two millions, that is, according to the value of money at that time, considerably above one hundred thousand pounds sterling; and he did the like on other occasions. He assisted King Lewis XIII at his death, and by his holy advice and exhortations that monarch expired in perfect sentiments of piety and resignation. Our saint was in the highest favour with the queen regent, Anne of Austria, who nominated him a member of the young king's council of conscience, and consulted him in all ecclesiastical affairs and in the collation of benefices, which office he discharged ten years.

Amidst so many and so great employs his soul seemed always united to God; in the most distracting affairs it kept, as it were, an eye always open to him, in order to converse continually with him. This constant attention to him he often renewed, and always when the clock struck, by making the sign of the cross (at least secretly with his thumb upon his breast), with an act of divine love. Under all crosses, disappointments, and slanders he always preserved a perfect serenity and evenness of mind, which it did not seem in the power of the whole world to disturb; for he considered all events only with a view to the divine will, and with an entire resignation to it, having no other desire but that God should be glorified in all things. Whether this was to be done by his own disgrace and sufferings, or by whatever other means it pleased the divine majesty, he equally rejoiced. Not that he fell into the pretended apathy or insensibility of the proud Stoics, or into the impious indifference of the false Mystics, afterwards called Quietists, than which nothing is more contrary to true piety, which is always tender, affectionate, and most sensible to all the interests of charity and religion. This was the character of our saint, who regarded the afflictions of all others as his own, sighed continually with St Paul after that state of glory in which he should be united inseparably to his God, and poured forth his soul before him with tears over his own and others' spiritual miseries. Having his hope fixed as a firm anchor in God, by a humble reliance on the divine mercy and goodness, he seemed raised above the reach of the malice of creatures or the frowns of the world, and he enjoyed a tranquillity within his breast which no storms were able to ruffle or disturb. So perfect was the mastery which he had gained over his passions that his meekness and patience seemed

unalterable, whatever provocations he met with. He was never moved by affronts, unless to rejoice secretly under them, because he was sure to find in them a hidden treasure of grace and an opportunity of vanquishing himself. This is the fruit of the victory which perfect virtue gains over self-love; and it is a more perfect sacrifice to God, a surer test of sincere virtue, a more heroic victory, and a more glorious triumph of the soul to bear a slander, an injurious suspicion, or an unjust insult in silence and patience than the most shining exterior act of virtue; a language often repeated but little understood or practised among Christians. Perfect self-denial, the most profound humility, and an eminent spirit of prayer were the means by which St Vincent attained to this degree of perfection, and he most earnestly recommended the same to his disciples. Humility he would have them to make the basis of his congregation, and it was the lesson which he never ceased to repeat to them, that they ought to study sincerely to conceal even their natural talents. When two persons of extraordinary learning and abilities once presented themselves, desiring to be admitted into his congregation, he gave them both a repulse, telling them, "Your abilities raise you above our low state. Your talents may be of good service in some other place. As for us, our highest ambition is to instruct the ignorant, to bring sinners to a spirit of penance, and to plant the gospel-spirit of charity, humility, meekness, and simplicity in the hearts of all Christians." He laid it down also as a rule of humility that, if possible, a man ought never to speak of himself or his own concerns, such discourse usually proceeding from and nourishing in the heart pride and self-love. This indeed is a rule prescribed by Confucius, Aristotle, Cato, Pliny, and other philosophers; because, say they, for any one to boast of himself is always the most intolerable and barefaced pride, and modesty in such discourse will be suspected of secret vanity. Egotism, or the itch of speaking always of a man's self, shows he is intoxicated with the poison of self-love, refers everything to himself, and is his own centre, than which scarce anything can be more odious and offensive to others. But Christian humility carries this maxim higher, teaching us to love a hidden life and to lie concealed and buried, as being in ourselves nothingness and sin.

St Vincent exerted his zeal against the novelties concerning the article of divine grace which sprang up in his time. Michael Baius, doctor and professor of divinity at Louvain, advanced a new doctrine concerning the grace conferred on man in the two states before and after Adam's fall, and some other speculative points; and Pope Pius V, in 1567, condemned seventy-six propositions under his name. Some of these Baius confessed he had taught, and these he solemnly revoked and sincerely condemned with all the rest in 1580, in presence of F. Francis Toletus, afterwards cardinal, whom Gregory XIII had sent for that very purpose to Louvain

Cornelius Jansenius and John Verger, commonly called Abbé de St Cyrán, contracted a close friendship together during their studies first at Louvain, afterwards at Paris, and concerted a plan of a new system of doctrine concerning divine grace, founded in part upon some of the condemned errors of Baius. This system Jansenius, by his friend's advice, endeavoured to establish in a book which, from St Austin, the great doctor of grace, he entitled *Augustinus*. After having been Bishop of Ipres from 1635 to 1638, he died of the pestilence, having never published his book, in the close of which he inserted a declaration that he submitted his work to the judgment of the church. Fromond, another Louvanian divine, an abler scholar and a more polite writer, polished the style of this book and put it in the press.<sup>1</sup> Verger became director of the nuns of Port-Royal, had read some ancient writers on books of devotion, and wrote with ease.<sup>2</sup> But his very works on subjects of piety, however neatly writ, betray the author's excessive presumption and forbidding self-sufficiency. He became the most strenuous advocate for Jansenism, and was detained ten years prisoner in the castle of Vincennes. He died soon after he had recovered his liberty in 1643. This man had, by his reputation, gained the esteem of St Vincent; but the saint, hearing him one day advance his errors and add that the church had failed for five or six hundred years past, he was struck with horror, and from that moment renounced the friendship of so dangerous a person. When these errors were afterwards more publicly spread abroad, he strenuously exerted himself against them; on which account Gerberon, the Jansenistical historian, makes him the butt of his rancour and spleen. But general and vague invectives of the enemies to truth are the commendation of his piety and zeal.<sup>3</sup> Our saint's efforts to destroy that heresy, says Abelly, never made him approve a loose morality, which on all occasions he no less avoided and abhorred than the errors of the Jansenists. He was particularly careful in insisting on all the conditions of true repentance, to render it sincere and perfect; for want of which he used to say, with St Ambrose, that some pretended penitents are rendered more criminal by their sacrilegious hypocrisy in the abuse of so great a sacrament than they were by all their former sins.

In the year 1658, St Vincent assembled the members of his congregation at St Lazarus, and gave to everyone a small book of rules which he had compiled. At the same time he made a pathetic exhortation, to enforce the most exact and religious observance of them. This congregation was again approved and confirmed by Alexander VII and Clement X. St Vincent was chosen by St Francis of Sales director of his nuns of the Visitation that were established at Paris. The robust constitution of the zealous servant of God was impaired by his uninterrupted fatigues and

<sup>1</sup> See F. Honoré *Addit. sur les Observ.* p. 241, &c., *Languet ep. Pastor*, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Honoré, *ibid.* pp. 245, 253, &c.

<sup>3</sup> See Collet's *life of St Vincent*, lib. iii. t. i. p. 260, and Abelly, lib. ii. ch. 12.

austerities. In the eightieth year of his age he was seized with a periodical fever, with violent night sweats. After passing the night almost without sleep and in an agony of pain, he never failed to rise at four in the morning, to spend three hours in prayer, to say mass every day (except on the three first days of his annual retreat, according to the custom he had established), and to exert, as usual, his indefatigable zeal in the exercises of charity and religion. He even redoubled his diligence in giving his last instructions to his spiritual children; and recited every day after mass the prayers of the church for persons in their agony, with the recommendation of the soul and other preparatory acts for his last hour. Alexander VII, in consideration of the extreme weakness to which his health was reduced, sent him a brief to dispense him from reciting his breviary; but, before it arrived, the servant of God had finished the course of his labours. Having received the last sacraments and given his last advice, he calmly expired in his chair, on the 27th of September 1660, being fourscore and five years old. He was buried in the Church of St Lazarus, in Paris, with an extraordinary concourse and pomp. An account of several predictions of this servant of God, and some miraculous cures performed by him whilst alive, may be read in his life written by Collet,<sup>1</sup> with a great number of miracles wrought through his intercession, after his death, at Paris, Angiers, Sens in Italy, &c. Mr Bonnet, superior of the seminary at Chartres, afterwards general of the congregation, by imploring the saint's intercession, was healed instantaneously of an inveterate entire rupture, called by the physicians *entero-epiplo-celle*, which had been declared by the ablest surgeons absolutely incurable; this miracle was approved by Cardinal Noailles. Several like cures of fevers, hemorrhages, palsies, dysenteries, and other distempers were juridically proved. A girl eight years old, both dumb and lame, was cured by a second Novena, or nine days' devotion, performed for her by her mother in honour of St Vincent. His body was visited by Cardinal Noailles in presence of many witnesses in 1712, and found entire and fresh, and the linen cloths in the same condition as if they were new. The tomb was then shut up again. This ceremony is usually performed before the beatification of a servant of God, though the incorruption of the body by itself is not regarded as a miraculous proof at Rome or elsewhere, as Collet remarks.<sup>2</sup> After the ordinary rigorous examinations of the conduct, heroic virtues, and miracles of this saint at Rome, Pope Benedict XIII performed with great solemnity the ceremony of his beatification in 1729. Upon the publication of the brief thereof, the Archbishop of Paris caused the grave to be again opened. The lady marechale of Noailles, the marshal her son, and many other persons were present; but the flesh on the legs and head appeared corrupted, which alteration, from the state in which it was found twenty-seven years before,

<sup>1</sup> Lib. ix.<sup>2</sup> T. ii. p. 540.

was attributed to a flood of water which twelve years before this had overflowed that vault. Miracles continued frequently to be wrought by the relics and invocation of St Vincent. A Benedictin nun at Montmirel, afflicted with a violent fever, retention of urine, ulcers, and other disorders, her body being swelled to an enormous size, and having been a long time paralytic, was perfectly cured all at once by a relic of St Vincent applied to her by Monseigneur Joseph Languet, then Bishop of Soissons. Francis Richer, in Paris, was healed in a no less miraculous manner. Miss Louisa Elizabeth Sackville, an English young lady at Paris, was cured of a palsy by performing a novena at the tomb of St Vincent; which miracle was attested in the strongest manner, among others, by Mrs Hayes, a Protestant gentlewoman with whom she lodged. Miss Sackville became afterwards a nun in the French abbey called of the Holy Sacrament, in Paris, lived ten years without any return of her former disorder, and died in 1742. St Vincent was canonized in 1737 by Pope Clement XII.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 19 :*

ST ARSENIUS, anchorite of Scète, who had found letters, titles and honours burdensome : ST MACHIRIA, eldest of the ten children of St Basil the Elder, who, after her father's death, consecrated himself by vow to God and assisted her mother to educate her younger brothers and sisters ; St Basil the Great, St Peter of Sebaste, and St Gregory of Nyassa learned from her their contempt of the world : ST SYMMACHUS, Pope, 498, a native of Sardinia : ST VINCENT OF PAUL, founder of the Fathers of the Mission and of the Sisters of Charity.

## JULY 20

### ST JOSEPH BARSABAS, CONFESSOR

HE was one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord, and was put in competition with St Matthias to succeed the traitor Judas in the apostleship. St Chrysostom remarks that St Joseph was not displeased, but rejoiced in the Lord, to see the preference given to St Matthias. After the dispersion of the disciples he preached the gospel to many nations: and, among other miracles, drank poison without receiving any hurt, as Papias, and from him Eusebius, testify. This saint, from his extraordinary piety, was surnamed the Just.

The lives of the apostles and primitive Christians was a miracle in morals, and a sensible effect of almighty grace. Burning with holy zeal, they had no interest on earth but that of the divine honour, which they sought in all things; and being warmed with the expectation of an eternal kingdom, they were continually discoursing of it, and comforting one another with the hopes of possessing it; and they did little else but prepare to die. Thus by example, still more than by words, they subdued their very enemies to the faith and brought them to a like spirit and practice. Their converts, by a wonderful change of manners, became in



a moment new creatures. Those who had been the most bitter enemies, long bent to lust and passion, became the most loving, forgiving, and chaste persons in the world. Has grace wrought in us so perfect a conversion? Do our lives glorify God's name in this manner, by a spirit and practice agreeable to the principles of our divine faith?

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 20 :*

ST AURELIUS, first Archdeacon and then Archbishop of Carthage, a friend of St Augustine : ST CESLAS, of the Order of St Dominic : ST JEROME *ÆMILIANI*, founder of the Congregation of Regular Clergy of Somascha, an order devoted to the education of children : ST JOSEPH BARSABAS, one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord : ST JUSTA and ST RUFINA, martyrs, two Christian women who maintained themselves and many poor by selling earthenware : ST MARGARET, martyred at Antioch in Pisidia in the last general persecution : and ST ULMAR or WULMAR, Abbot of Samer, three miles from Boulogne.

## JULY 21

### ST PRAXEDES, VIRGIN

SHE was daughter of Pudens, a Roman senator, and sister to St Pudentiana, and in the days of Pope Pius I and the Emperor Antoninus Pius edified the church of Rome by the bright lustre of her virtues. All her great riches she employed in relieving the poor and the necessities of the church. By the comfort and succours which she afforded the martyrs she endeavoured to make herself partaker of their crowns, and she lived in the assiduous exercise of prayer, watching, and fasting. She died in peace, and was buried near her sister on the Salarian road. Bede and other martyrologists style her a virgin. An old *title* or parish church in Rome, bearing her name, is mentioned in the life of Pope Symmachus. It was repaired by Adrian I and Paschal I, and lastly by St Charles Borromeo, who took from it his title of cardinal.

The primitive Christians lived only for heaven, and in every step looked up to God, regardless of all lower pursuits or meaner advantages that could interfere with their great design of knowing and loving him. This constant attention to God awed them in their retirements; this gave life and wings to their devotions, and animated them to fervour in all their actions; this carried them through the greatest difficulties and temptations, and supported them under all troubles and afflictions.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 21 :*

ST ARBOGASTUS, Bishop of Strasburg, claimed by the Irish and the Scotch, though his Acts say he was of a noble family of Aquitaine : ST BARNABESCIABUS, martyr, who in old age exhibited a cheerful countenance on the rack, where he refused to worship fire and water : ST PRAXEDES, daughter of Pudens, a Roman senator, and sister to St Pudentiana ; she edified the Church in Rome by her virtues : ST VICTOR OF MARSEILLES, martyr, a Christian officer who went from house to house at night inspiring the faithful to be firm under persecution : and ST ZOSIMA, Bishop of Comana, martyred about 204.

JULY 22

## ST MARY MAGDALEN

THE illustrious penitent woman mentioned by St Luke<sup>1</sup> was, by her perfect conversion, an encouraging example and model of penitence to all succeeding ages. She is called the Sinner, to express her pre-eminence in guilt. This epithet seems to imply that she led a lewd and disorderly life. The scandal of her debaucheries had rendered her name infamous throughout the whole city. Nain, Tiberias, or some neighbouring place in Galilee seems to have been the chief theatre of her disorders, at least at the time of her conversion. They took their rise from small beginnings; for no one becomes a great proficient in vice all at once. The fences of virtue are weakened by degrees before they are entirely broken down.

The steps by which young persons, like this sinner, are led into evil courses are pointed out to us by our Divine Redeemer in the parable of the prodigal son. The source of all his misfortunes is a love of independence and of his own will.

The prodigal son, blinded by his passions, thought himself prudent and strong enough to be his own governor and master, and flattered himself that his love of liberty and pleasure was not very criminal or unjust; but from this root all vices have sprouted up, and are not to be restrained by him who opens to them such a door by shaking off the happy yoke of subjection, which is the divine ordinance. Such is the strange disorder of that mischievous passion, that though the prodigal son lived in dignity and plenty, and enjoyed all temporal blessings and all the comforts of life without feeling its troubles or knowing its miseries, yet he was not content. His subjection to a good father was true freedom; he was the object of all his parent's cares, and he reaped the fruit of all his labours. But so distempered was his soul that the constraint of this tender guardian's watchful eye seemed to embitter all his pleasures, and such an obedience appeared to him an insupportable burden and slavery, which therefore he would shake off to have no other law but his own will. This was his capital enemy, though he would not be so persuaded; and by indulging it he fostered a young tiger in his own bosom, which soon grew too strong for him and tore him to pieces. We are astonished at the quick progress which the passions make when once the bridle is let loose. The prodigal youth, seeing himself possessed of that dangerous liberty which he had so passionately desired, full of false joy at the prospect of imaginary happiness, went into a foreign country, to be at a greater distance from all troublesome advisers. His passions, being so far yielded to, had no longer any bounds, and he denied his heart nothing of its irregular desires,

<sup>1</sup> Luke vii.



being no longer master of himself. Unthinking and blinded he soon squandered away his fortune, without keeping any accounts or knowing how it was spent; he was surprised to find his hands empty and himself starving, and that he had not yet found those enjoyments which he had promised himself; instead of which he had met with nothing but shadows and miseries. Nevertheless, cleaving still to so treacherous a world, and yet entertaining desperate foolish hopes of finding happiness in it, he went on in the pursuit of his passions; and losing himself daily more and more in the mazes of sin, he was at length reduced to have no other company but that of the most filthy of beasts, and almost to perish with hunger at the heels of the hogs which he was condemned to serve and fatten.

This is a true picture of the sinner who has thrown off the holy yoke of God and has enslaved himself to his passions. How earnestly ought every Christian to pray that God may always so strengthen his resolution with his grace that he may never receive any other than his sweet and holy law? What completes the misfortune of the habitual sinner is that few who have fallen into that gulf ever sincerely rise again. Christ indeed came from heaven to save all such; in his tender compassion for their miseries he invites them to return to him, and for their encouragement has shown a remarkable example of his mercy in our saint. Having considered, in the image of the prodigal son, the unhappy steps by which she fell, we shall, with greater edification, take a view of the circumstances which have given so great a lustre to her repentance.

Jesus, not long after he had raised to life the son of a widow at Nain, a town in Galilee, was invited to dinner by a certain Pharisee called Simon, who seems to have lived in the same town or some neighbouring city, as Calmet shows. Our Lord was pleased to accept his invitation, chiefly that he might confound the pride of the Pharisees by manifesting the power of his grace in the wonderful conversion of this abandoned sinner. His bowels had yearned over her spiritual miseries, and he spread upon her soul a beam of his divine light which penetrated her understanding and her heart so effectually that, listening to the interior voice of his grace, she saw the abominable filth and miseries in which she was plunged, was filled with confusion and horror, and conceived the most sincere detestation of her ingratitude and baseness. Our Lord went to the banquet in great joy to wait for this soul, which he himself had secretly wounded with his holy love, and which he was pleased to draw to him in the midst of a great assembly, that by her public repentance she might repair the scandal she had given, and he might give to all succeeding ages an illustrious instance of his mercy towards all repenting sinners. She began her conversion by entering into herself. As her fall was owing to inconsideration, so doubtless her first step towards repentance was serious reflection on the misery of her present condition, the happiness she had forfeited, and the

punishment she was to expect. From these considerations she raised her thoughts to others higher and more noble, those of divine love, reflecting who he is whom she had so grievously offended, and how excessive and incomprehensible his goodness is, which she had so long and so basely slighted. This motive of love, to which Christ ascribed her conversion, drew from her eyes a torrent of tears, and made her cry out with the prodigal son, that she had sinned against heaven.

In the like dispositions does our penitent raise her heart to God. She hearkens not to the suggestions of worldly prudence which might seem to require some time for deliberation, for settling her concerns, or for taking proper measures about her conversion itself; the least delay appears to her a new crime, a fresh aggravation of her misfortune. She was informed that our Divine Redeemer was at table in the house of the Pharisee. She did not so much as think of the disgrace to which she exposed herself by appearing before a numerous and honourable assembly, of the reproaches and disdain she was to expect from the Pharisee, or the fear of moving Christ himself to indignation by an unseasonable importunate address. One moment's delay in seeking her physician seemed too much, because her heart was now wounded with divine love. Sinners who, in returning to God, think too nicely that they have temporal interests to provide for, friends to please, and opportunities to wait for, are far from the dispositions of this happy penitent. She found mercy because she sought it before all things. Had she dallied with grace, it would have been justly withdrawn; had she been for compounding with her passions, they would have again enslaved her more strongly than ever. She found all difficulties vanish in a moment, because her conversion was sincere and perfect; by one steady resolution the work is done. What further deliberation can one that has sinned require than that the gate of mercy is yet open to him?

In like sentiments this penitent woman seeks her Almighty Physician, professing herself altogether undeserving and unworthy of mercy, and therefore alleges nothing on her side to recommend her to his compassion except only that she was the work of his hands, though an unnatural and rebellious child, in whom that title was only a grievous exaggeration of her guilt; but she confidently appeals to his infinite goodness and mercy, and begs that for his own sake he will save her, in whom he still discovers, though frightfully disfigured, the traces of his divine image which his own omnipotent hand had formed, and which it is in his power easily to repair and perfect.

In these dispositions she bolted into the chamber where Jesus was at dinner with the Pharisee, and, regardless of what others thought or said of her past life, or of her present boldness, she made up to her Redeemer and Physician. She durst not appear before his face, and therefore went behind him; and the nearer she approached his sacred person streams

gushed more abundantly from her eyes. She reflected how basely she had defiled and sought to destroy her own soul, and how impiously she had robbed Christ of many other souls, whilst he was come from heaven, and was ready to sacrifice himself on the cross for her and them; and at this and other like considerations she was not able to moderate her grief. The inward confusion she felt at the sight of her sins and baseness made her despise all the confusion which she could receive before men, or rather rejoice in it to meet that contempt which she acknowledged herself most justly to deserve from all creatures. Attentive only on Christ, from whom she sought her health and salvation, standing at his feet, she watered them with her tears, wiped them with her hair, most respectfully kissed them, and anointed them with rich perfumes and sweet-scented essences which she had brought in an alabaster box. She now defaces or consecrates to penance whatever had formerly been an instrument of sin; her eyes, which had been full of dangerous charms, are now converted into fountains of tears to cleanse the stains of her soul; and her hair, once dressed in tresses and curls to ensnare souls, now hangs loose and dishevelled, and serves for a towel to wipe our Lord's feet, which she kisses with her lips and scents with her perfumes, formerly the incentives of vice. The penitent must consecrate his riches to Christ in the poor which are his feet; must employ his eyes in tears, and his lips in supplications for mercy, and must make all that serve to charity and mortification which before served self-love. These exterior offerings must be accompanied with the interior sacrifices of the heart, by humble confidence in the divine mercy, by lively faith and ardent love, with which the soul of a sinner approaches to Jesus and is reconciled to him. Our holy penitent prepared, as it were, an altar at the feet of our Lord, on which she offered to him the true sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart. There losing the use of her speech whilst grief intercepted her words, she spoke only by her tears; but before Him to whom the secrets of her heart were open, these sighs, and this silence itself, was a louder cry than that of any words could have been. Thus she earnestly begged of God's pure mercy, that pardon which she confessed herself most unworthy to obtain.

Jesus, who had himself inspired her with these dispositions, cast on her a favourable eye of mercy. He was come to the Pharisee's banquet exulting with holy joy, which spring from his foreknowledge of the conversion of this soul; the mainspring of all he did and suffered on earth being that insatiable thirst for the salvation of sinners which brought him from heaven, and which was not to be satisfied but by his sufferings on the cross, and by the last drop of his blood poured out for them upon it. In these sentiments he had testified that it was his delight to converse with sinners, out of compassion for their miseries, being desirous to draw them out of that gulf into which they had blindly plunged themselves. This

he expressed by many moving parables, especially that of the prodigal son, where he paints his mercy in the strongest colouring by the manner in which he represents the good old father receiving him upon his return. From the time of his going astray the tender parent never allowed himself any respite in his tears, inquiries, and search: at length, from an eminence on which he looked about on every side, still hoping he should one day see him return, he descried him at a distance. He saw only a disfigured, languishing, and frightful spectre; the wretched remains of a debauchee and rake worn out by riots and revellings: his features horrid and defaced, his body resembling a walking skeleton, but half covered with a few filthy rags. Yet, under this disguise, his eye, directed by love, discovered him at a great distance, and before any other could see him, knew that it was his son. Far from being disgusted at such a spectacle, he ran to meet him, affection giving vigour to his enfeebled age. He remembered no longer his past behaviour, but rushing to his embraces, kissed him, and bathed his head and face with floods of tears which joy drew from his eyes, and which he mingled with the tears of sincere grief and affection which the penitent son abundantly poured forth. The good father wiped them off his face, prevented his confusion, restored him to his former rank, called for, and gave him the best robe, a ring upon his finger (a symbol of dignity), and shoes on his feet. He, moreover, ordered a fatted calf to be forthwith killed, and gave a splendid entertainment with music, inviting all to rejoice with him and make merry, because his son, whom he lamented as dead, was come to life again, and he that had been lost was found. If the birth of this son, when he was first brought into life, had been to him a subject of great joy, how much more reason had he to rejoice, seeing him now restored by a second birth, so much the more joyful, as it wiped away his tears and changed his grievous sorrow into comfort? Thus doth our loving God and Redeemer receive the penitent sinner; thus is there joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance. The Holy Ghost clothes him with the robes of sanctifying grace, puts a ring on his hand, the emblem of his divine gifts, and gives shoes to his feet, that is, fortifies him with strength to tread on the venomous aspic and basilisk, and to trample upon the raging lion and dragon.

The Pharisee who had invited Jesus to his table was shocked to see an infamous sinner, well known in that city, admitted by our Lord to stand at his feet, and secretly said within himself, that He could not be a prophet, or know that she was a scandalous person. To inculcate our strict obligation of shunning bad company, God commanded all intimacy with public sinners to be avoided, lest the sound should be infected by the contagion of their vices. The haughty Pharisees construed this law according to the false maxims of their pride, as if it were a part of virtue to despise sinners, and as if that respect and charity which we owe to all

men were not due to such; but the humble man, whilst he shuns the snare of wicked company, places himself below the worst of sinners, as the most ungrateful of all creatures; discharges all offices of charity, and spares neither tears nor pains to reclaim those that are gone astray. The contempt of anyone is always the height of pride, which degrades a man in the sight of God beneath that sinner whom he undervalues. This was the case of the Pharisee; and such was the disorder of his pride that it betrayed him into a rash judgment by which he condemned a penitent who was then a saint; and, arraigning the goodness and mercy of God, blasphemously censured the sanctity of our Redeemer. Nothing is more wonderful in the conduct of the Son of God on earth than the patience and meekness with which he bore the contradictions, murmurings, and blasphemies of men in most unjustly condemning his charity itself. We cannot form any idea, unless we have experienced it, what force such injurious treatment has to make men abandon the good which they have begun, and cease bestowing favours on those that murmur against them. Christ has encouraged us by his example to this heroic practice of virtue, teaching us that the most effectual means of confounding slanderers is to instruct them by silence, meekness, perseverance in good works, and a constant return of sincere kind offices; he shows how we must still persevere steadfastly to regulate our intentions and actions according to the maxims of piety, and give ourselves no trouble about what men will say of us.

Christ sought indirectly by a parable to cure the pride and rash judgment of this Pharisee and convince him that she to whom much had been forgiven, then loved God the more; consequently was more acceptable to him. Some interpreters understand his words, that much was forgiven this penitent, because her love and sorrow were great and sincere; others take the meaning to be that gratitude would make her after this mercy more fervent in love. Each interpretation is undoubtedly true; but, as A Lapide shows, the first seems most agreeable to the context. The conversion of sinners is usually begun by motives of fear, but is always perfected by those of love; and the fervour of their love will be the measure of the grace which they will receive. By the love of vanity the soul falls from Christ; and by his divine love she returns to him. How fervent was this love in our devout penitent!

Mercy is the property and the favourite attribute of our divine Redeemer; and tinder is not so soon kindled by fire when applied to it, as the divine mercy blots out all sin when it is implored with a heart full of confusion and truly penitent. Hence Christ assured this humble sinner that her offences were cancelled, and that her lively faith animated by ardent charity, which drew from her eyes tears of repentance, had saved her; and he insured to her that solid and happy peace which is the fruit of such a repentance. The pious Cardinal Berulle admires the happy



intercourse between the heart of this holy penitent and that of Jesus; the first employed in the most perfect sentiments of compunction, love, and entire sacrifice; the second, in the tender motions of mercy, love, and goodness; the penitent offers floods of tears; these Jesus repays with treasures of graces and mercy, by which he makes her soul a heaven on earth, as bright and pure as the angels, and the throne of the whole blessed Trinity. The hearts of the penitent and of Jesus are two sources which perpetually answer each other; the more the penitent pours forth her heart in contrition, the more abundantly does Jesus in return bestow on her his infinite graces. It is at the feet of Jesus that these wonders are wrought; witness this example, and that of the sister of Lazarus, in the house of Simon the Leper, in Bethania. It is good for us to make this our dwelling in spirit. The adorable feet of Jesus, so often wearied in seeking sinners, and at last bored on the cross for their salvation, are the source of all blessings. Here this true penitent consecrates to him her heart, her mind, her actions, her perfumes, all she is or has; and here he cleanses her soul, and kindles in her his love, which the rebel angel lost in heaven. All his attention is taken upon her, he entertains her alone, forgetting the master of the feast and others that were seated with him at table. He even gave the Pharisee sensible proofs how much her fervour and penance surpassed, in the sight of God, his pretended justice and charity, though it were presumed real. Perseverance in this fervour completed her happiness. Gratitude to God for so great a mercy and so distinguishing a grace, was to her a fresh spur to advance every day in this love with greater ardour and fidelity. Thus the greater the debts were which had been forgiven her, the more earnestly she strove with all her powers to love him who vouchsafed to accept her humble sacrifice. This same motive of gratitude ought to have no less weight with those who, by God's singular grace, have always preserved their innocence; for, whether God shows mercy by pardoning sins or by preventing them in us, we are totally indebted to Him for the grace which we receive. Upon this great principle, St Austin addresses the Pharisee who despised our holy penitent, in the following words:<sup>1</sup> "O Pharisee! to say you are less indebted to the divine mercy, because less was forgiven you, is a capital ingratitude and pride. For, by whom were you preserved from those crimes which you did not commit? One who hath sinned much, stands indebted for the gracious pardon of exceeding great debts. Another who hath sinned less, owes to God the benefit that he hath not defiled himself with grievous sins. You have not fallen into adultery; but God saith to you, it is owing to me who governed and protected you. If no tempter ever enticed you, this was the effect of my special care and providence in your favour. If you escaped the occasions of dangers from

<sup>1</sup> Aug. Serm. xcix. c. 6, ed. Ben. olim xxiii. ex. 50.

time and place, this likewise was ordained by me. Perhaps a temptation and an opportunity of sinning occurred; yet I withheld you by wholesome fear that you did not consent to the evil. You are indebted to me for your preservation from all the crimes which you did not commit; for there is no sin that one committeth, which another person might not commit if he were not preserved by him who made man." Of this our fervent penitent is an instance who, after her conversion, surpassed others in the ardour of her charity, with which she gave herself up entirely to the service of her Redeemer.

St Clement of Alexandria, St Gregory the Great, and many other writers both ancient and modern, doubt not but this penitent was Mary Magdalen, of whom St Luke makes first mention in the following chapter. The surname seems to have been given her from Magdala, a town mentioned by Josephus, or rather from Magdalum, both situated in Galilee. She was by extraction a Galilean, and is reckoned among the devout women who followed Christ from Galilee. St Luke, after speaking of the conversion of her that had been a sinner, says<sup>1</sup> that certain women who had been cured of wicked spirits and infirmities followed Christ in his travels through Galilee and up to Jerusalem, and assisted him with their substance; and our Lord received such good offices from them, to give them an occasion of exercising a gratitude and charity with which he was well pleased. Among these, the evangelist names Mary Magdalen, out of whom our Lord had cast seven devils, Joanna the wife of Chusa Herod's steward, and one Susanna. St Gregory the Great, Lightfoot, and some others, by these seven devils understand seven capital vices of which Magdalen was cured by her conversion; but Maldonat, Grotius, and others, doubt not but she had been literally possessed by seven evil spirits, by whom she might be agitated at intervals and which were cast forth at her conversion. Gratitude and devotion having attached her to our Divine Redeemer after so great a benefit, she followed him almost wherever he went, that she might have an opportunity of listening to all his sacred instructions, and of exercising her charity in ministering to him of her substance. She attended him in his sacred passion and stood under the cross on Mount Calvary. For her to arrive at the summit of divine love, it was necessary she should pass through the sharpest trials. "No one," says Thomas à Kempis, "was highly rapt whose fidelity was not sooner or later put to the test; for he is not worthy of the high contemplation of God who hath not, for God's sake, been exercised with some tribulation; and the trial going before is usually a sign of ensuing consolation." A great mystery is contained in those words of the evangelist, "There stood near the cross of Jesus, Mary his mother, and his mother's sister Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen." Happy association! happy state and

<sup>1</sup> Luke viii. 2.

situation near Jesus on his cross! cries out the devout Cardinal Berulle. This is a new order of souls which consists in the spirit, in the interior, and is invisible to men, but visible and glorious to the eyes of God and the angels. An order of souls crucified with Jesus and through Jesus, which takes its birth from his cross. The order, at the same time, both of the cross and of heaven; the order and school of love by the martyrdom of the heart; which by learning to die to the world and inordinate self-love, lives to God and his pure love. This happiness we attain to, by being united in spirit to Jesus crucified, as Magdalen was at the foot of his cross. She suffered by love what he suffered in his body by the hands of the Jews. The same cross crucified Jesus and Magdalen in him and with him. The thorns pierced her heart with his head; and her soul was bathed in all his sorrows; but the crucifixion was in both a martyrdom of love; and that love which triumphed over Jesus by making him die on the cross, crucified her heart to all inordinate love of creatures, thenceforward to reign and triumph alone in all her affections, so that she could say in a twofold sense, "My love is crucified." Mary Magdalen forsook not her Redeemer after his death, but remained by his sacred body, was present at its interment, left it only to obey the law of observing the festival, and having rested on the Sabbath from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday, as soon as the festival was over, went to buy spices in order to embalm our Lord's body. Having made all things ready, in company with other devout women, she set out very early the next morning with the spices, before it was light, and arrived at the sepulchre just when the sun was risen.<sup>1</sup> As they went they were anxious how they should get the heavy stone which shut up the door of the monument, taken away; but upon their arrival found it removed to their hands. The pious women looked into the sepulchre, and finding the body not there, Mary Magdalen ran to inform Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and I know not where they have laid him." SS. Peter and John, the two most fervent in love among the apostles, ran immediately to the sepulchre, and were there assured by the holy women who were at the door of the monument that going in they had seen two angels clad in white shining apparel, and that one of them who sat at the right hand of the place where the body had laid, bid them not to fear, but to acquaint the apostles that Jesus was risen, showing them at the same time where his body had been laid. Peter and John, having narrowly viewed the sepulchre, doubted no longer of what was told them, and in great astonishment returned to Jerusalem to the other disciples. Mary Magdalen, who had brought them to the sepulchre of her Lord, made the throne of divine love, would not return with them or be drawn from the sacred place where the true ark of the

<sup>1</sup> Mark xvi. 2; Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1.

testament, the body of her Redeemer, had rested three days, and continued at the monument bemoaning herself for not being able to see her Redeemer, either dead or alive. Not being able to assuage the violence of her grief and of her desire to see her Lord, she stood weeping without the door of the sepulchre. The entrance being low and narrow she stooped down to look into it again and again, and beheld the two angles in white, one of them sitting at the place where Jesus's head lay, and the other at the feet, who thus accosted her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She replied, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Neither the surprise of this apparition nor the brightness and glory of these heavenly messengers could touch her heart, or divert her thoughts from him whom she loved, and whom alone she sought, and we suffer so many foolish objects to distract us, and carry away our affections. In her answer to the angels she called him "My Lord," to express the share which by love she had in him, and her title to him as her God, Lord, and Redeemer. Afterwards to the apostles she calls him "The Lord," to excite them to duty and love to the common Lord of all creatures. But why did not these angels inform her that he whom she so earnestly sought was risen in glory? Doubtless, because the Lord of angels would reserve it to himself to give her that comfort. Blessed be thy name for ever, O adorable Jesus, who so tenderly wipest away the tears of thy servants with thy own hand, and sweet voice, and convertest their sorrow into transports of inexpressible joy. Jesus first manifested himself to the Magdalen in disguise to make a trial himself of her love; but his tenderness could not suffer a delay, and he soon discovered himself openly to her; for, as soon as she had returned the answer above mentioned to the angels, she turned about and saw Jesus himself standing by her, but took him for the gardener. He asked her why she wept, and whom she sought. She said to him, "Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away." According to the remark of St Bernard and of St Thomas of Villa Nova, love made her not to name him, because being full of Him alone, she imagined everybody else must be so too, and that this stranger must understand of whom she spoke. Love also made her forget her own weakness and think herself able to carry a heavy corpse, provided she could be so happy any way as to serve her beloved; for to ardent love nothing seems impossible or difficult. Jesus, infinitely pleased with her earnestness and love, manifested himself to her, saying with his sweet and amiable voice, "Mary!" He at first mentioned her tears and the object which she so earnestly sought, to excite her love. All this while she knew him not, though he was present and conversing with her, because these words carried not with them the ray of light to discover him; but her name was no sooner pronounced by him, but his voice excited in her a rapture of light and love, and gave

her the most sublime and full knowledge and the sweetest enjoyment of the most desirable of objects, of him risen in glory who was the life of the world, and her life. Hearing him sweetly call her by her name and thus knowing him, she turning said, "Rabboni," that is, Master. And casting herself at his feet in transports of devotion she would have embraced them. But Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me; for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and tell them that I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." That is, my Father by nature, yours by grace, says St Austin. He bade her make haste to carry his message to his beloved disciples for their speedy comfort, and not lose time in giving demonstrations of her reverence and love. St Leo explains these words of our Lord as follows,<sup>1</sup> "It is not a time to demonstrate your affection for me in such a manner as if I were in a mortal state; I am with you but for a short time, to strengthen your faith. When I shall have ascended to my Father, then you shall again possess me for eternity." Thus Mary Magdalen, out of whom Jesus had cast seven evil spirits, was the first that saw Him after his rising from the dead. This pre-eminence of grace, this distinguishing favour and love of Jesus, was the recompense of her ardent love, by which she attended last his body in the sepulchre, from which she was only drawn by the duty of the Sabbath; and she was the first who returned thither: she sought him dead and found him living. In obedience to his commands she immediately departed to acquaint the apostles with the joyful message.<sup>2</sup> Jesus, who suffered her so long at his feet to satisfy her ardent love and compunction when he received her to mercy, here allows her, after her long search, scarce to remain a few moments in the state of enjoyment; but he separates himself from her to return into the secret of inaccessible light, invisible to mortal eye. Why does not he who is Life itself allow her to live in his happy presence? Why does not he allow her at least as many hours of enjoyment as she had spent in her search of him? But this separation itself is an effect of his greatest love, this life being a state of action, of conflict, and of trials for the exercise of virtue; and Magdalen in this separation itself which was from him, by his appointment and for her greater advancement in his love, found by obedience, zeal, and resignation to his will, her comfort life, and great increase of his love and all graces. The other devout women who had seen the angels at the sepulchre, in their return to Jerusalem, were also favoured with an apparition of our Lord. He having met and saluted them, they prostrated themselves at his feet, and embraced them worshipping him, though they were greatly afraid.<sup>3</sup> Jesus bid them not fear, but go and tell his brethren that he would go before them into Galilee, where they should see him.

It is an ancient popular tradition of the inhabitants of Provence in

<sup>1</sup> St Leo Serm 2, de Ascens.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxviii. 9. Luke xxiv. 10.

<sup>3</sup> John xx. Calmet, Vie de J. C. ch. 37.

France, that St Mary Magdalen, or perhaps Mary the sister of Lazarus, St Martha, and St Lazarus, with some other disciples of our Lord, after his ascension, being expelled by the Jews, put to sea, and landed safe at Marseilles, of which church they were the founders, St Lazarus being made the first bishop of that city. The relics of these saints were discovered in Provence in the thirteenth century, those of St Mary Magdalen at a place now called St Maximin's, those of St Martha at Tarascon upon the Rhone, and others in St Victor's at Marseilles. They were authentically proved genuine by many monuments found with them in these several places. Charles I, King of Naples, and brother of St Lewis was at that time sovereign Count of Provence; but he being then in Naples engaged in war with the house of Arragon, his son Charles of Anjou, Prince of Salerno, governed Provence. This prince was beaten at sea by the fleet of the King of Arragon in 1284, and taken prisoner; and though his father died the year following, he could not recover his liberty before the year 1288. He ascribed his deliverance to the intercession of our saint, the discovery of whose relics had excited his devotion to her: he had already founded the Church of St Maximin's upon the spot where they were discovered, and assisted at the solemn translation of them in 1279. He committed this royal foundation to the Dominican friars and the prior, who is nominated by the king, is exempt from the ordinary jurisdiction both of the Archbishop of Aix and of the immediate superiors of his Order. The chief part of the relics of this saint was translated from the subterraneous chapel in the middle of this church, and being put in a porphyry urn, the present of Pope Urban VIII, was placed over the high altar. King Lewis XIV and the principal noblemen of his court were present at this translation, which was performed with great pomp in 1660. The saint's head with many other relics, remain in the subterraneous chapel; it is set in a gold case encased with large diamonds and surmounted with the royal crown of Charles II, styled King of Sicily or Naples. Before it is a curious statue of Queen Anne of Brittany, on her knees, made of enamelled gold. Three leagues from St Maximins, towards Marseilles, is a famous solitary convent of Dominicans, situated on a very high rock, encompassed on every side with wild deserts and mountains. It is called La Ste. Baume; which in the Provençal language signifies Holy Cave. It was anciently a celebrated hermitage, and is a place now resorted to by pilgrims out of devotion to this glorious saint. Both Latins and Greeks keep the festival of St Mary Magdalen on the 22nd of July; it is in some places a holiday of precept, and was such formerly in England, as appears from the council of Oxford in 1222.

The pious Cardinal Berulle was most tenderly devoted to this great saint, whom he called his principal patroness; and nothing can be more affecting in sentiments of compunction and divine love than

the discourses which he has left us in her honour. She is the excellent model of penitents.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 22 :*

ST DABIVS or DAVIUS of Ireland, a zealous preacher in Scotland and in his own country: ST JOSEPH of Palestine, commonly called Count Joseph, a title given to him by Constantine in 323: ST MARY MAGDALEN: ST MINEVE, Abbot, related to the emperor Charlemagne, who, from his infancy determined to serve Christ: and ST VANDRILLE, or WANDRE GISILUS, Abbot of Fontenelle in Normandy, "humble on the highest pinnacle of honours and mortified amidst pleasures."

## JULY 23

### ST APOLLINARIS, MARTYR, BISHOP OF RAVENNA

[See Pinius in the Acts of the Saints, Julij, t. v. p. 329, and Farlat, Illyrici Sacri, t. i. p. 259.]

ST APOLLINARIS was the first Bishop of Ravenna. Bede, in his true Martyrology, says that he sat twenty years, and was crowned with martyrdom in the reign of Vespasian. His acts say that he was a disciple of St Peter, and made by him Bishop of Ravenna. Though their authority deserves little regard, this circumstance must be allowed, being agreeable to the time and supported by other authorities. St Peter Chrysologus, the most illustrious among his successors, has left us a sermon in honour of our saint,<sup>1</sup> in which he often styles him a martyr; but adds, that though he frequently spilt portions of his blood for the faith, and ardently desired to lay down his life for Christ, yet God preserved him a long time to his church and did not suffer the persecutors to take away his life. So he seems to have only been a martyr by the torments he endured for Christ, which he survived at least some days. His body lay first at Classis, four miles from Ravenna, still a kind of suburb to that city and its seaport, till it was choked up by the sands. In the year 549 his relics were removed into a more secret vault in the same church, as an inscription still extant there testifies. See Mabillon.<sup>2</sup> St Fortunatus exhorted his friends to make pilgrimages to his tomb, and St Gregory the Great ordered parties in doubtful suits at law to be sworn before it. Pope Honorius built a church under his name in Rome about the year 630. It occurs in all Martyrologies, and the high veneration which the church paid early to his memory is a sufficient testimony of his eminent sanctity and apostolic spirit.

The virtue of the saints was true and heroic, because humble, and proof against all trials. That of the heathen philosophers was lame, and generally false and counterfeit, whence Tertullian calls the latter, traders in fame. "Where is now the similitude," says he, "between a philosopher and a Christian? a disciple of Greece and of heaven? a trader in fame and a saver of souls? between a man of words and a man of works?" And St Jerom writes, "A philosopher is an animal of fame, one who basely

<sup>1</sup> Serm. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Mab. Iter. Italic. p. 41.

drudges for the breath of the people." Lactantius severely rallies Cicero, because, though he was very sensible of the vanity of the worship then established, yet he would not have that truth told the people for fear of unhinging the religion of the state. "Now what is to be done with a man," says our Christian philosopher, "who knows himself in an error, yet wilfully dashes upon a rock, that the people may do so too? who makes no use of his wisdom for the regulation of his life, but entangles himself to ensnare others whom, as the wiser person, he was obliged to rescue from error. But, O Cicero, if you have any regard for virtue, attempt rather to deliver the people out of ignorance. It is a noble enterprise and worthy of all your powers of eloquence. Never fear but your oratory will hold out in so good a cause, which never failed you in the defence of so many bad ones. But Socrates's prison is the thing you dread; and therefore truth must want a patron; but certainly, as a wise man, you ought to despise death in competition with truth; and you had fallen much more honourably by speaking well of truth, than for speaking ill of Antony; nor will you ever rise to that height of glory by your Philippics, as you would have done by labouring to undeceive the world and dispute the people into their senses."<sup>1</sup> The philosophers did not love truth well enough to suffer for it. Plato dissembled, for fear of Socrates's hemlock; but the Christian religion raised its professors above all considerations present, for the joy that was set before them.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 23 :*

ST APOLLINARIS, believed to have been a disciple of St Peter, first Bishop of Ravenna, where, as St Bede tells us, he sat twenty years and was crowned with martyrdom in the reign of Vespasian : ST LIBORIUS, Bishop of Mans (348), who loved silence and prayer and never conversed with seculars except on spiritual matters.

## JULY 24

### ST LUPUS, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF TROYES

(A.D. 478)

[From his ancient accurate life, extant in Surius, and illustrated with notes by F. Bosch the Bollandist, Julij, t. vii. p. 19. See also Ceillier, t. xv. p. 40; Tillemont, t. xvi. p. 127; Rivet, Hist. Litter. t. ii. p. 486; Calmet, Hist. de Lorraine, t. i. lib. vi. n. 44. p. 274; and Camuzat, Catal. Episc. Trecentis, p. 153, at Antiquitates Tricassinæ, &c., 8vo, 1610.]

ST LUPUS, called in French St Leu, was born of a noble family at Toul, and being learned and eloquent, pleaded at the bar for some years with great reputation. He married Pimeniola, a virtuous sister of St Hilary of Arles. After six years spent in holy wedlock, fired with an ardent desire of serving God with greater perfection, they parted by mutual consent, and made a mutual vow of perpetual continency. Lupus betook himself to the famous abbey of Lerins, then governed by St Honoratus. He lived there a year and added many austerities to those prescribed by

<sup>1</sup> Lactant. lib. de Origine Erroris, § 3.



the rule, yet always regulated his fervour by the advice of St Honoratus. He sold great part of his estate for the benefit of the poor, when he renounced the world. After the first year, when St Honoratus was made Bishop of Arles, he went to Macon in Burgundy to dispose of an estate he had left there, in charitable uses. He was preparing to return to Lerins when he was met by the deputies of the church of Troyes, which, upon the death of St Ursus in 426, had chosen him bishop, the eighth from St Amator, founder of this see. His resistance was to no purpose, and he was consecrated by the prelates of the province of Sens. In this dignity he continued the same practices of humility, mortification, and as much as possible even of poverty. He never wore any other garments than a sackcloth and a single tunic, lay upon boards, and allotted every second night entire to watching in prayer. He often passed three days without taking any nourishment, and after so rigorous a fast allowed himself nothing but a little barley bread. Thus he lived above twenty years; labouring at the same time in all his pastoral functions with a zeal worthy of an apostle.

About the latter end of the fourth century Pelagius, a British monk, and Celestius, a Scot, broached their heresy in Africa, Italy, and the East, denying the corruption of human nature by original sin, and the necessity of divine grace. One Agricola, a disciple of these heresiarchs, had spread this poison in Britain. The Catholics addressed themselves to their neighbours the bishops of Gaul, begging their assistance to check the growing evil. An assembly of bishops, probably held at Arles in 529, deputed St Germanus of Auxerre and St Lupus of Troyes to go over into our island to oppose this mischief. The two holy pastors, burning with zeal for the glory of Christ, accepted the commission the more willingly as it seemed laborious and painful. They came over and entirely banished the heresy by their prayers, preaching, and miracles. St Lupus, after his return, set himself with fresh vigour to reform the manners of his own flock. In this he displayed so great prudence and piety, that St Sidonius Apollinaris calls him, "The father of fathers and bishop of bishops, the chief of the Gallican prelates, the rule of manners, the pillar of truth, the friend of God, and the intercessor to him for men."<sup>1</sup> He spared no pains to save one lost sheep, and his labours were often crowned with a success which seemed miraculous. Among other instances it is recorded that a certain person of his diocese, named Gallus, had forsaken his wife and withdrawn to Clermont. St Lupus could not see this soul perish, but wrote to St Sidonius, then Bishop of Clermont, a strong letter so prudently tempered with sweetness, that Gallus by reading it was at once terrified and persuaded, and immediately set out to return to his wife. Upon which St Sidonius cried out, "What is more wonderful than a single reprimand, which both affrights

<sup>1</sup> B. 6, Ep. i.

a sinner into compunction, and makes him love his censor!" This letter of St Lupus and several others are lost; but we have one by which he congratulated Sidonius upon his promotion to his see, having passed from a secular prefecture or government to the episcopacy, which charge he shows to be laborious, difficult, and dangerous. He strongly exhorts him, above all things, to humility. This letter was wrote in 471, and is given us by D'Achery.<sup>1</sup>

God at that time afflicted the western empire with grievous calamities, and Attila with a numberless army of Huns overran Gaul, calling himself, "The Scourge of God," to punish the sins of the people. Rheims, Cambray, Besançon, Auxerre, and Langres, had already felt the effects of his fury, and Troyes was the next place threatened. The holy bishop had recourse to God in behalf of his people by fervent prayer, which he continued for many days, prostrate on the ground, fasting and weeping without intermission. At length putting on his bishop's attire, full of confidence in God, he went out to meet the barbarian at the head of his army. Attila, though an infidel, seeing him, was moved to reverence the man of God who came up to him boldly, followed by his clergy in procession with a cross carried before him. He spoke to the king first and asked him who he was? "I am," said Atilla, "the Scourge of God." "Let us respect whatever comes to us from God," replied the bishop; "but if you are the scourge with which heaven chastises us, remember you are to do nothing but what that almighty hand which governs and moves you, permits." Attila, struck with these words, promised the prelate to spare the city. Thus the saint's prayer was a better defence than the most impregnable ramparts. It protected a city which had neither arms nor garrison, nor walls, against an army of at least four hundred thousand men which, after plundering Thrace, Illyricum, and Greece, crossing the Rhine, had filled with blood and desolation the most flourishing countries of France. Attila, turning with his army from Troyes, was met on the plains of Chalons by Aëtius, the brave Roman general, and there defeated. In his retreat he sent for St Lupus, and caused him to accompany him as far as the Rhine, imagining that the presence of so great a servant of God would be a safeguard to himself and his army; and sending him back he recommended himself to his prayers. This action of the good bishop was misconstrued by the Roman generals, as if he had favoured the escape of the barbarian, and he was obliged to leave Troyes for two years. He spent that time in religious retirement, in great austerity and continual contemplation. When his charity and patience had at length overcome the envy and malice of men, he went back to his church, which he governed fifty-two years, dying in the year 479. The chief part of his body is kept in a rich silver shrine; his skull and principal part of his head in another far more precious, in

<sup>1</sup> Spicileg, t. v. p. 579.

the figure of a bishop, formed of silver, adorned with jewels and diamonds, said by some to be the richest in France. Both are in the abbatial church of regular canons of St Austin, which bears the name of St Lupus. He was first buried in the Church of St Martin in Areis, of the same Order, then out of the walls, though long since within them. Many churches in England bear his name. The family name of Sentlow among us is derived from St Leu, as Camden remarks.

It was by omnipotent prayer that the saints performed such great wonders. By it Moses could ward off the destruction of many thousands, and by a kind of holy violence disarm the divine vengeance.<sup>1</sup> By it Elias called down fire and rain from heaven. By it Manasses in chains found mercy and recovered his throne; Ezechias saw his health restored and life prolonged; the Ninevites were preserved from destruction; Daniel was delivered from the lions, St Peter from his chains, and St Thecla from the fire. By it Judith and Esther saved God's people. By the same have the servants of God so often commanded nature, defeated armies, removed mountains, cast out devils, cured the sick, raised the dead, drawn down divine blessings, and averted the most dreadful judgments from the world, which, as an ancient father says, subsists by the prayers of the saints.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 24 :*

ST CHRISTINA, a Tuscan martyr, suffered a cruel death for the faith at Tyro : ST DECLAN, first Bishop of Ardmore : ST FRANCIS SOLANO, educated by the Jesuits, he was professed a Franciscan in 1569. Later a missionary in Peru, and Tucuman : ST KINGA or CUNEGUNDES, much venerated in Poland : ST LUPUS (478), Bishop of Troyes, called in French ST LEU, married to the virtuous sister of St Hilary. They parted by consent and Lupus betook himself to the famous Abbey of Lerins : ST LEWINE, a British virgin, martyred under the Saxons before their conversion to the Faith : ST ROMANUS and ST DAVID, martyrs, patrons of Muscovy : and ST WULFHAD and ST RUFFIN, two brothers, martyrs.

## JULY 25

### ST JAMES THE GREAT, APOSTLE

ST JAMES, the brother of St John Evangelist, son of Zebedee and Salome, and nearly related to Christ, was called the Great, to distinguish him from the other apostle of the same name, who was Bishop of Jerusalem and is surnamed the Less, perhaps because he was lower in stature or, more probably, because he was the younger. St James the Great seems to have been born about twelve years before Christ, and was many years older than his brother, St John. Salome is otherwise called Mary, and was sister to the Blessed Virgin, which some take in the strict sense of the word; others understand by it only cousin-german, according to the Hebrew phrase, and think that the Blessed Virgin was an only daughter.

St James was by birth a Galilean, and by profession a fisherman, with his father and brother, living probably at Bethsaida, where St Peter also

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxxii. 10.

dwelt at that time. Jesus, walking by the lake of Genesareth, saw St Peter and St Andrew fishing, and he called them to come after him, promising to make them fishers of men. Going on a little farther on the shore, he saw two other brothers, James and John, in a ship, with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets, and he also called them; who forthwith left their nets and their father, and followed him.<sup>1</sup> Zebedee, their father, seems to have approved of their resolution, and their mother, Salome, devoted herself heartily to the service of our Lord, as the gospels frequently mention. All fervent souls ought to be in the like dispositions of perfect sacrifice with these apostles, without the least inordinate attachment to anything on earth, being most ready to renounce everything if God's greater glory should require it. With what boundless liberality does the Divine Spirit shower down his choicest treasures upon souls which thus perfectly open themselves to him! This the apostles, of whom we speak, happily experienced in themselves. But they, for some time, so followed Christ and listened to his divine instructions as still to return, from time to time, to their fishing trade for a maintenance. It was in the same first year of Christ's preaching that Peter and Andrew, at the command of their divine Master, took a prodigious shoal of fishes by a miraculous draught. James and John were their partners, though in another boat, and were called in to assist in hauling up the nets. Astonished at this manifestation of Christ's power, they entirely quitted their business, the more perfectly to attach themselves to him.\*

In the year 31 St James was present with his brothers, St John and St Peter, at the cure of St Peter's mother-in-law, and at the raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead. This same year Jesus formed the college of his apostles, into which he adopted St James and his brother St John. He gave these two the surname of Boanerges, or Sons of Thunder, probably to denote their active zeal. When a town of the Samaritans refused to entertain Christ, they suggested that he should call down fire from heaven to consume it; but our Blessed Redeemer gave them to understand that meekness and patience were the arms by which they were to conquer.<sup>2</sup> Christ distinguished St Peter, St James, and St John by many special favours above the rest of the apostles. They alone were admitted to be spectators first of his transfiguration, and afterwards of his agony and bloody sweat in the garden. The instructions and example of the Son of God had not fully enlightened the understandings of these apostles, nor purified their hearts, before the Holy Ghost had shed his beams upon them; and their virtue was still imperfect, as appeared in the following instance:—Mary Salome, the mother of James and John, relying upon their merit and her relation to Christ, and imagining that he was going to erect a temporal monarchy according to the notion of the carnal Jews concerning the Messias, presented to him a request that her two

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iv. 22.<sup>2</sup> Luke v. 17.<sup>3</sup> Luke ix.

sons might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left, in his kingdom. By this example we are put in mind how often the fondness of parents renders them the spiritual murderers of their own children, and makes them blindly excuse, flatter, and encourage their secret vices and passions. At the same time we are taught how formidable an enemy ambition is, which could find admittance in the breasts of two apostles (though yet novices) before the descent of the Holy Ghost. They doubtless disguised their vice under the cloak of a reasonable desire and a virtuous emulation of preferment, with a design of serving their Master by it. Only the children of light discover the deceit and snare of this enemy; only profound humility discerns and condemns the specious pretences of subtle pride and covetousness. The two sons of Zebedee seem to have spoken by the mouth of their mother; wherefore Christ directed his answer to them, telling them they knew not what they asked; for in his kingdom preferments are attainable, not by the most forward and ambitious, but by the most humble, the most laborious, and the most patient. He therefore asked them if they were able to drink of his cup of suffering. The two apostles, understanding the condition under which Christ offered them his kingdom, and glowing with ardour and courage to suffer, answered peremptorily, they were able to do it. Our Lord told them they should indeed have their portions of suffering; but for the honours of his kingdom, he could make no other disposal of them than according to his decrees in conjunction with his Father in proportion to every one's charity and patience in suffering.

The virtue of the most fervent novices in the service of God is very imperfect, so long as entire self-denial and a great assiduity and spirit of prayer have not yet prepared their souls for, and called down upon them a plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost, who fills their understanding with a clear and new heavenly light, and by the ardour of his charity consumes the rust of the affections and fills them with his fervour. In this state even the moral virtues acquire an heroic and infused degree of perfection. Humility now gives the soul a much more clear and feeling knowledge of her own infirmities, baseness, and imperfections, with much stronger sentiments of a just contempt of herself; and the like is to be said of divine and fraternal charity and all other virtues; so that she seems to herself translated into a region of new light, in which by continual heroic acts of these virtues, and especially of prayer and contemplation, she makes daily and wonderful advances. This perfection the apostles received in a more miraculous manner by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, when he not only engraved the law of love deeply in their hearts, but also bestowed on them the external graces and gifts of prophecy and miracles, and qualified them for the execution of the great commission they had received from Christ.

How St James was employed in preaching and promoting the gospel after Christ's ascension we have no account from the writers of the first ages of Christianity. It appears that he left Judea some time after the persecution that was raised at the martyrdom of St Stephen in the year 30, and was returned again ten years after, when he suffered martyrdom. The addition to St Jerom's catalogue of illustrious men tells us that he preached the gospel to the twelve tribes of the Jews in their dispersion up and down the world. Though the apostles, during the first twelve years, preached generally in the neighbourhood of Judea, yet St James might in that interval make a voyage to Spain and preach some time in that country, as Baronius observes. F. Cuper adds that his martyrdom happened above a year after the dispersion of the apostles, in which space he had the fairest opportunity of visiting Spain. That he preached there is constantly affirmed by the tradition of that church, mentioned by St Isidore, the Breviary of Toledo, the Arabic books of Anastasius, Patriarch of Antioch, concerning the Passions of the martyrs and others. Cuper the Bollandist traces this tradition very high, and confirms it from St Jerom, St Isidore, the ancient Spanish office, &c., and from many corroborating circumstances. St Epiphanius says that St James always lived a bachelor, in much temperance and mortification, never eating flesh nor fish; that he wore only one coat and a linen cloak, and that he was holy and exemplary in all manner of conversation. He was the first among the apostles who had the honour to follow his divine Master by martyrdom, which he suffered at Jerusalem, whither he was returned, in the eleventh year after our Lord's ascension.

Agrippa, the grandson of Herod by Aristobulus, was author of this persecution. Being brought up at Rome in the reign of Tiberius, he, basely flattering Caligula in his passions, gained the confidence of that monster, who was no sooner placed on the imperial throne than he gave Agrippa the title of king, with the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias, which were then vacant. Claudius, in the year 41, enlarged his dominions, giving him also Jerusalem and all the rest of Judea, Samaria, and whatever other provinces had been possessed by his grandfather Herod. He gave also to his younger brother Herod the little kingdom of Chalcis in Syria, near Mount Libanus. Agrippa reigned with great state and magnificence. Being very fond of pleasing the Jewish nation, when he came from Cæsarea to Jerusalem to keep the Passover in the year 43 he began to persecute the Christians; and the first who fell a victim to his popular zeal was St James the Great, whom he caused to be apprehended and beheaded there a little before Easter, in the year 43, about fourteen years after the death of Christ. Clement of Alexandria, and from him Eusebius,<sup>1</sup> relate that his accuser, observing the great courage and constancy of mind wherewith the apostle underwent his trial, was so affected

<sup>1</sup> *Ens. Hist. lib. ii. c. 9.*

with it that he repented of what he had done, declared himself publicly a Christian, and was condemned to be beheaded with St James. As they were both led together to execution, he begged pardon of the apostle by the way for having apprehended him. St James, after pausing a little, turned to him and embraced him, saying, "Peace be with you." He then kissed him, and they were both beheaded together. The body of the apostle was interred at Jerusalem, but not long after carried by his disciples into Spain and deposited at Iria Flavia, now called El Padron, upon the borders of Gallicia. The sacred relics were discovered there in the beginning of the ninth century in the reign of Alphonsus the Chaste, King of Leon. By the order of that prince they were translated to Compostella, four miles distant, to which place Pope Leo III transferred the episcopal see from Iria Flavia. This place was first called Ad St Jacobum Apostolum, or Giacomia Postolo, which words have been contracted into the present name, Compostella. It is famous for the extraordinary concourse of pilgrims that resort thither to visit the body of St James, which is kept with great respect in the stately cathedral. F. Cuper the Bollandist proves the truth of the tradition of the Spanish church concerning the body of St James having been translated to Compostella, and gives authentic histories of many miracles wrought through his intercession, and of several apparitions by which he visibly protected the armies of the Christians against the Moors in that kingdom. The military order of St James, surnamed the Noble, was instituted by Ferdinand II in 1175.

The church, by the martyrdom of St James, lost in her infancy one of her main pillars; but God was pleased that his name should be glorified by so illustrious a testimony, and that it should appear he was the immediate supporter and defender of his church. For when it was deprived of its chief members and pastors, it remained no less firm than before; and even grew and gathered strength from the most violent persecutions. The apostle with confidence committed his tender flock to God, and commended to them his own work, whilst he rejoiced to go to his Redeemer and to give his life for him.

*The following feasts are celebrated on July 25 :*

ST CHRISTOPHER ("one who carries Christ"), martyr under Decius in Lycia : ST CUCUFAS, a martyr of Spain, who is called ST COUGAT in Barcelona, ST QUIQUENFAT at Ruel, near Paris, and ST GUINEFORT in other parts of France : ST JAMES THE GREAT, Apostle : ST NISSEN, whom St Patrick baptized and ordained deacon and appointed Abbot of Mount Garret in Wexford : ST THEA and ST VALENTINE, virgins, and ST PAUL, martyrs, who prayed for the emperor, the judge who condemned them, and their executioner with a fervour that drew tears from all present at their glorious death.

